

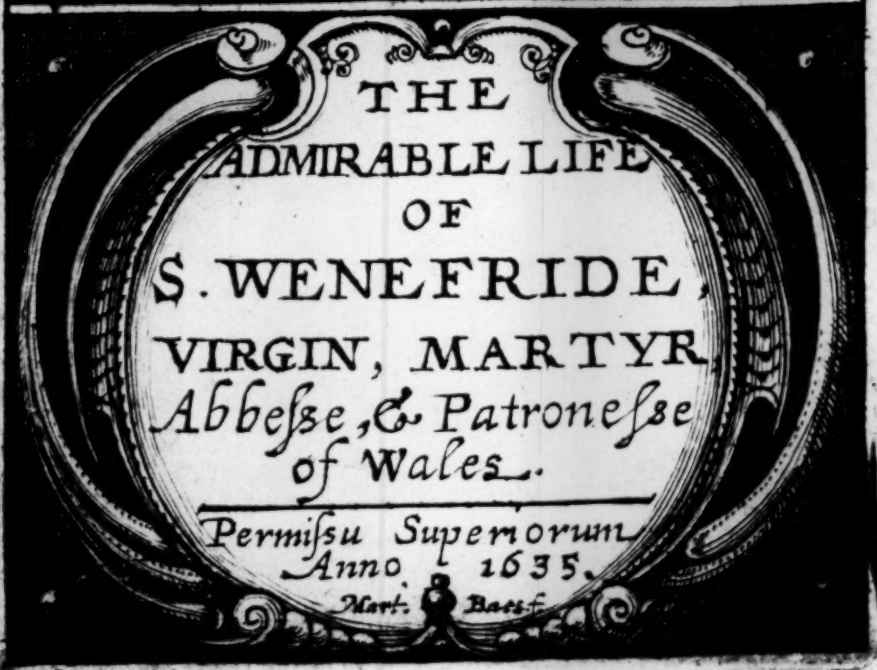


THE
ADMIRABLE LIFE
OF
S. WENEFRIDE,
VIRGIN, MARTYR,
Abbesse, & Patronesse
of Wales.

Permissu Superiorum
Anno 1635.

Mart.

Bacc.



THE
ADMIRABLE LIFE
OF SAINT
VVENEFRIDE

Virgin, Martyr, Abbess.

Written in Latin about 500. yeares
ago, by ROBERT, Monke and
Priour of Shrewsbury, of the Ven.
Order of S. BENEDICT.

Deuided into two Bookes.

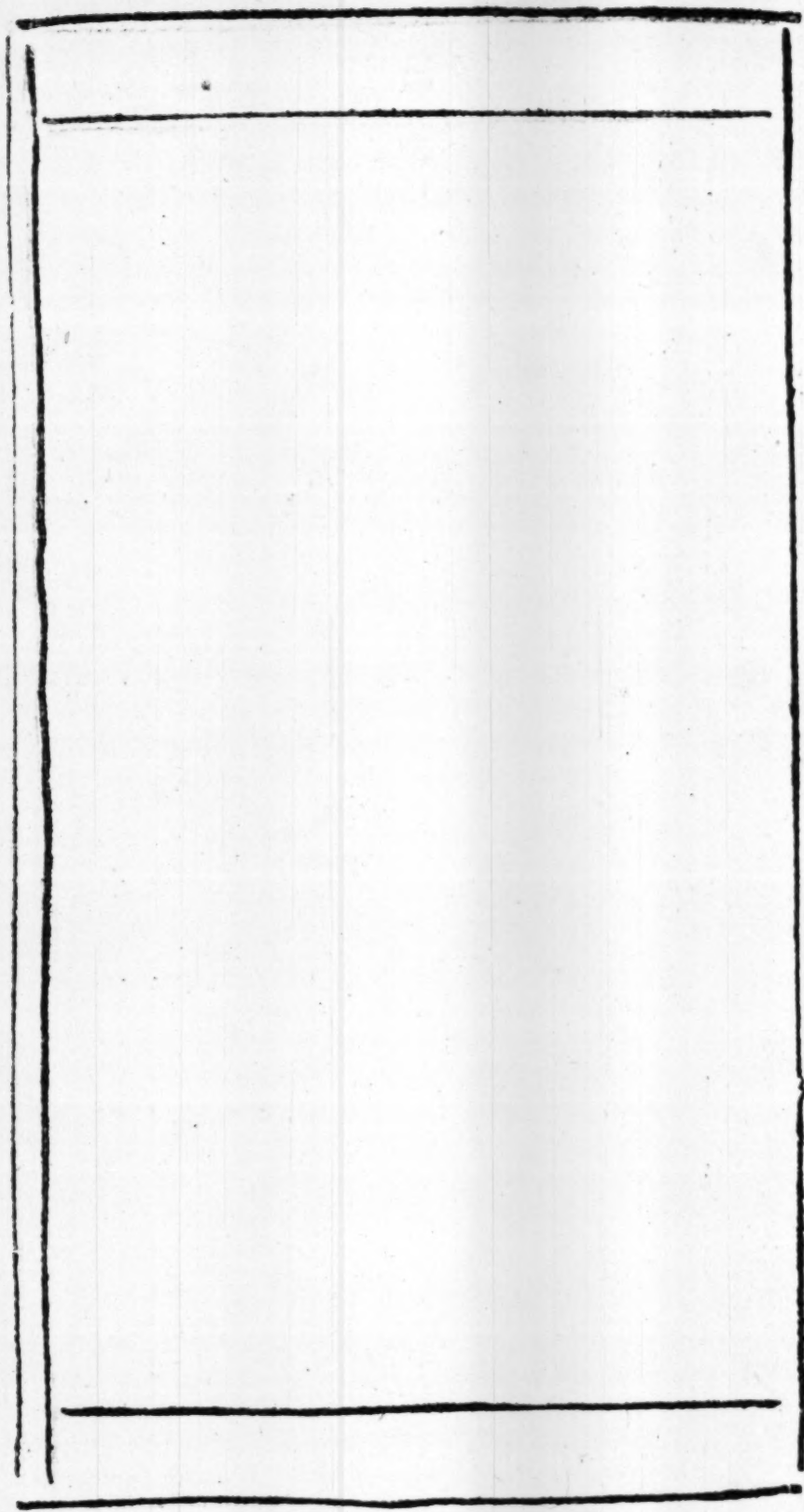
And now translated into English, out
of a very ancient and authentick
Manuscript, for the edification and
comfort of Catholikes.

By I. F. of the Society of IESVS.



*Her memory is worthily honoured amonge
Men, whose Soule is passed to the ioyes
of Angells. S. Max. hom. in S. Euseb.*

Permissu Superiorū M.DC. XXXV.



G
I


D



in
an



T O
THE NOBLE
GENTLEWOMAN
his Vertuous, & much
Honored friend ,
Mrs.
DOROTHY BARLOW.

 *Albeit , your En-
glish Birth , and
French breeding,
in Pallaces commonly,
and Courtes, with very*

THE EPISTLE

Noble and Princely Ladies, haue made You a Stranger to Wales for the greatest part of your life; yet your Marriage since, with a chiefe Gentleman of that Country, and many Children borne there (living partes of your selfe, as that great Prince of Philosophers calleth them) may vworthily make me repute you S. Wenefrides Countrey-vvoman.

Your singular Deuo-
tion

DEDICATORY.

tion besides , to that renowned Saint, and great Patronesse of WALES, which lately caused you (as I have heard) to measure , with no few Attendants of friends and servants about you , the whole length of that Countrey, to visit the devout & memorable Place of her Martyrdome, added to that former Respect, and a constant desire withall in my selfe , to

THE EPISTLE

honour, in what I may,
& serue you; haue power-
fully preuayled, & moued
me to present this transla-
ted Life of that glorious
VIRGIN, ABBESSE
and MARTYR, espe-
cially vnto you.

VWho as a bright mor-
ning-star ceaseth not euen
now, to shyne, in her
owne knowne Graces,
and daily Honours done
by deuout people vnto her;
when as other Stars, in
this

DEDICATORY.

this late darkenes, ouer-
vvhelming our Countrey,
are quite vanished out of
liuing mēs sights: I meane,
innumerable Men, and
VVomen of Wales, very
conspicuous in tymes past,
for their admired Sancti-
ty, and honoured in Chur-
ches dedicated particular-
ly vnto them, are now
utterly forgotten, and ne-
uer againe, as knowne
Saints, to be honoured by
vs, until in glory we shall

★

4

come

THE EPISTLE

come to behould their Soules first (if we make our selves worthy of that happines , by a neere practise and perfect imitation of their Vertues) and Bodies afterwards , out of their now contemned , and trampled ashes , resplendently rayseed .

And this Day-star of ours S. Wenefride , still shining in the Glory of her Merits , after other Saintes memories are past , and

Monu-

DEDICATORY.

*Monuments defaced, may
haue, perchance, a happy
Relation (as the naturall
Day-starr bath to the ri-
sing Sunne) to an ending
of this Darke Night of
Religions, different from
that, anciently by her, and
holily professed, (vvhetherin
likevvise her ovvne, and
other Saintes Shrines,
haue byn lamentably de-
faced) by a vvished resto-
ring of Catholique Reli-
gion, vvvhich as an heauen-*

THE EPISTLE

ly Light hath scarſly euer
beene obſcured, in your
owne, or your Husbands
ancient Families.

A rare Happines in
theſe tymes, and to few
Houſes of Noble note, ſo
graciously affoarded by the
Authour of all Graces,
whereby, their earthly
Worth, hath with hea-
venly Graces ben happily
matched; and are ſo emi-
nently now graced, by
Your owne particular

Ver-

DEDICATORY.

Vertues, as S. Wen fride
vill gladly accept such
a Patronesse of hert Life
printed, vvhoso holily imi-
tateth the same, as it vvas
acted by her. VVherin her
Blessed Intercession hath
already, and vill I doubt
not, perseuerantly assiste
you, by obteyning of her
Diuine Spouse, Tempo-
rall Blessings, -and Eter-
nall Graces, for you and
yours; vvhich I daily
vvish, and hartily pray
for,

THE EPISTLE

*for, as your ever devoted
friend, and servant,*

In Christ IESVS,


I. F.



THE



THE
TRANSLATORS
PREFACE
TO HIS READER

 Mongst many people
Apostolically conuer-
ted to the Fayth of
Christ, the *Britans* or
ancient Inhabitants of England,
are vndoubtedly to be numbred,
as *Origen* 4. in *Ezechielem*, *Tertul-
lian contra Iudæos*, *Dorotheus* in his
Synopsis, *Theodoret*, and others
haue expressely affirmed, besides
many home proofes, and preg-
nant testimonies of that their so
timely

The Preface of

timely conuersion. Which primitive Fayth of theirs hauing byn, by a continuall mixture of Romans, and other Infidells liuing amongst them, and persecuting them for the same, exceedingly decayed; was againe cultiuated by *Fugatius*, and *Damianus* Apostolicall Preachers, sent for that purpose by Pope *Elutherius* vnto them, the very next age after the Apostles.

Since which tyme albeit they lost to the Saxons, the greatest, & fruitefullest part of their Country, and were enforced to betake themselves to the mountanous places of *Wales* (as now it is called) and *Cornewall*; yet haue they still vntill this last age, vnalteredly maintayned their primitive Fayth, and Religion, as in the first

two Chapters of the Protestants
Apology for the Roman Church,
written by that learned man *M.*
Brerely, is most cleerly proued, &
demonstrated.

And to recompence perhaps,
their Constancy therein, and suf-
ferings for it, they were blessed
from tyme to tyme with great
numbers of *Saintes*, flourishing
amongst them; so as many Pa-
rishes in *Wales* and *Cornewall*, re-
tayne no other names at this day,
then such as anciently they recea-
ued from holy Men and Women
liuing in them. Amongst all
which no one was for sanctity &
miraculous testimonies thereof,
more then *S. Wenefride* famously
renowned; and her Monuments
now after a generall vastation of
Monasteries, and *Saintes* memo-
ries

The Preface of

ries in our Countrey, remayne vndefaced, and no lesse glorious in *Wales* and *England*, then *S. Catherines* Tombe on *Mount Sinai*, amongst fierce *Mahometans* and *Paynims*, is straungely, yet conserued.

And as the Sepulcher of that renowned Saint, is by faithfull people in those Easterne parts of the world Religiously visited: so in like manner do multitudes of holy Pilgrims frequently now resort vnto the place of *S. Wenefrids* martyrdome, & wonder to see such a flood of Cristall pure Water gushing there at once, out of the Earth, and a most sumptuous Chappell standing yet ouer it. So that the three Fountaynes neere *Rome*, which issued miraculously out of the ground, where *S. Paul*

was

the Translatour.

was martyred, are not by much so curiously with building couered.

Moreouer, the waters of this holy Well, seeme to haue in the more then naturall vertues, by giuing a musky, and most delightfull sweetnes to the greene mosse growing on the wals of this stately inclosure, and colouring all the stones which lye in the bottom thereof, with spots, as it were, of pure bloud, in them strangely appearing. Many miracles also haue ben done heeretofore to manifest the sanctity of this place; which because they haue not ben by depositions of persons sworne, and publique Instruments authentically approued, I forbear heere further to mention, then as my Authour doth afterwards recount them;

• •

and

The Preface of

and will only say, that this Venerable and Costly monument, is the more to be admired, for that it standeth in so hilly, poore, and barren a Countrey, which hath scarcely any thing, but this fayre building remarkable in it, exactly therefore drawne out by *M. Speed* in his Table of *Flint-shyre*, and in his Comment historically declared; yet with this tale ridiculously added, that Catholiques visiting the *Well*, do really believe the rednes of the stones to be the Martyrs very blood, and the Mosse growing therein her hayre, like to one of *Ouids* Metamorphosing Fables.

The Life of this Noble Virgin and Martyr, was diligently and authentically gathered (as himselfe in his Prologue professeth)

by

the Translatour.

by *Robertus Salopiensis*, a learned Monke and *Priour* of *Shrewsbury*, of the holy order of *S. Benedict*, liuing in King *Stephens* tyme, & for his great sincerity, by *Cardinall Baronius*, *Surius*, *Capgrau*, *Pits*, *Posseuinus*, and others, worthily commended. Whose booke copied truly out of an old authentick Manuscript, I haue heere in sense faithfully translated, and done no otherwise in altering the Authors old phrases, scarcely expressible in good English, then as if I had stripped some body out of Welsh courle frize, and put him into a suite of English playne Karesay.

And if the matter of the Booke, conteyning in it sundry strange and miraculous passages, shall seeme ridiculous to *Protestants*:

The Preface of

chancing to read them, it is not much to be wondred at, sithence they will be their owne choosers, euen in the very beliefe of sacred Verities themselues, diuinely reuealed; and sleight, as fabulous Legends, the Liues of Saintes, written by *S. Athanasius, S. Ambrose, S. Hierome, S. Climachus, S. Gregory*, and other holy Fathers.

It sufficed my Author, and so it shall me, that deuout Catholiques for whose instruction and comfort he penned first his Historie, will piously and probably assent to that, which heere is credibly proposed vnto them, auoyding two extremes therein; the one is of belieuing things ouerlightly, & the other of belieuing nothing at all but as fancies, and selfe-opinions do guide them. The which,

in

in Sectaries following commonly this latter extreme in their iudgment of Catholique writings, is a kind of Infidelity, and Impiety mixed together: for if God be wonderfull in his Saintes (as the Royall Prophet telleth vs, *Psal. 67.*) and Christ in his Ascension towards heauen did so expressely promise, that these signes should follow such as did belieue in him, *In my name (said he) they shall cast out Diuells, they shall speake with new tongues &c.* why should we vpon probable testimonies refuse to belieue, such wonders to haue ben done by Saintes, as diuine testifications of their true Fayth, and great graces heere obtayned?

The sacred body of this Virginnall Blessed Saint, was solemnly translated to *Shrewsbury* in this

The Preface of

Authors tyme in the yeare of our Lord 1138. and raigne of *K. Stephen*, and there, in his owne Abbey magnificently interred, that greater honour and veneration, in so populous, and Religious a Citty (as that was then) might be yielded vnto it; where it continued, for aboue 400. yeares, till Heresie preuayled vtterly to overthrow in our Country the publique profession of Catholique Religion, and deface the Venerable monuments thereof euery where almost then extant. In which common ruine & calamity hapning, the shrine of this great Saint with numbers of others became sacrilegiously defaced, and her sacred Reliques lye since disperſed God knoweth where or how, vntill by his omnipotency, they shall come

to

to be vnited againe, & most gloriously rayfed, *For God* (sayth the same holy Prophet *Psal. 33.*) *doth conserue all the bones of his seruants:* and it hath increased I doubt not their ioyes accidentall in heauen, to haue had heere on earth for his sake, their Reliques by the Churches enemies, and haters of true Religion contemptuously abused, after due Reuerence yeilded by deuout people vnto them, and singular blessings receaued from Almighty God by their powerfull intercession.

Neither haue moderne Sectaries shewed in any one act more, the little Communion, which they haue in this world, or are likely to haue in the other, with the Saintes of Christs Church, then in contemning, scattering,

The Preface of

and destroying their Reliques,
of which in generall S. Ambrose
writeth thus, *Serm. 93. de Sanctis*
Nazario & Celso. If thou aske me
what I honour in their flesh and bones
now dissolued and consumed? I honour
in the Martyrs flesh, the scarres of
those woundes, which for Christ he
susteyned; I honour the memory of his
vertue still living; I honour in his
ashes the seedes of Eternity; I honour
the body that taught me to loue Christ,
and not to feare the cruellest death for
him. Why should not faithfull soules
honour that body, which Diuells trem-
ble at? &c. *quod Christum honorauit*
in gladio, quod cum Christo regnabit
in calo: that body, I say, which hono-
red Christ in the sword, and which
shall reigne with him in Heauen.
These (sayth S. Basill speaking of
the 40. Martyrs Reliques) are those

who

the Translator.

who protect our Countrey, and like strong Towers guard vs from our enemies.

Wherefore I may vse, of such as scattered, and destroyed the holy reliques of *S. Wenefride*, and many other Saintes in our Countrey, *S. Gregory Nazianzens* words in his first Oration against *Iulian the Apostata*; *Thou hast not reuerenced the Hostes slaine for Christ, whose bodies, yea very drops of their bloud, or other small signes of their passions, can worke the same effects which their soules themselves can doe;* to wit such Iudaine cures of infirmities and diseases, as *S. Austin lib. 22. de Ciuitate Dei cap. 8.* affirmeth by *S. Stephens* Reliques, as they passed through *Afrique* towards *Rome*, to haue byn done in his presence: which Protestants will

The Preface of

as little believe, as they do the miraculous passages of *S. Wenefride* recounted in this Historie, amongst whome there is no one so straunge, but the like may be found in other Saintes liues, by holy & ancient Fathers authentically written; and in some of them far more straunge: which piously read, & probably believed by faithful soules for 1400. yeares since, cannot but temerariouly be reiected now, and contemned by Protestants; whose corrupt Iudgment, as I regard not in this my translation: so I hope good Catholiques will read it with edification and comfort. For it may well delight them, as it doth me, to thinke that we haue anciently had such store of renowned Saintes liuing in our Country, as, be-

sides

the Translatour.

sides this life, *D. Harpsfeld*, the English Martyrologe, Prudentiall Ballance, *M. Broughton*, and other ancienter historians do witnessse, though the Names, and liues of the greatest part of them are only in the booke of life registred, and will in the generall Iudgmēt be gloriously reuealed.

That *S. Wenefride* likewise, should liue againe, after her head cut off, and do the things which heere are written of her in her Historie (the chiefe blocke which incredulous Readers perhaps will stumble at) is no more hard to be believed, then that *Lazarus* after he had ben dead, and stinking in his graue, should liue agayne, sit at table with Christ, and be Bishop of Marsills in *France* many yeares after. And if it be obiected

that

The Preface of

that Christ himselfe, did worke that miracle, able to do all things: I may well answere, that he promised his owne power, and far greater wonders then himselfe had wrought, to be done by his seruants, extant now in authentickall Histories as certainly since performed.

Lastly, I intreat my courteous Reader, for a Conclusion of this my Preface, to note & mend with his penne, these ensuing errors of my Translation, committed in the printing by strangers, wholly ignorant of our English tongue.

Faults

Faults escaped in the Printing.

- Pag. 24. lin. 7. *dele* that
Pag. 45. lin. 9. where *read* which
Pag. 75. lin. 1. as *read* or
Pag. 82. lin. 9. their *read* his
Pag. 88. lin. 5. *dele* so
Pag. 94. lin. vlt. his *read* this
Pag. 103. lin. 11. *dele* most
Pag. 109. lin. 16. saying *read* said
Pag. 119. lin. vlt. noble Virginitie, *read*
Martyrdome for your Virginitie.
Pag. 120. lin. 1. *dele* of your Martyr-
dome.
Pag. 121. lin. 14. *dele* he
Pag. 128. lin. 5. Charity *read* Clarity
Pag. 146. lin. 16. in, *read* in a suddaine
Pag. 148. lin. 14. and to be, *dele* to
Pag. 165. lin. 3. fall *read* fell
Pag. 173. lin. 10. *Wales*, *read* that Coun-
trei.
Pag. 204. lin. 7. streames *read* streame
Pag. 225. lin. 2. hath *read* had
Pag. 251. lin. 9. was *read* he was
Pag. 269. lin. vlt. little *read* so little.

*The Prayer, and Sequence of S.
Wenefride, taken forth of the
ancient Missall of England, accor-
ding to the use of SARVM.*

Oratio.

O Mnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui
beatam Wenefredam Virginitatis
præmio decorasti: fac nos quæsumus
eius pia intercessione, mundi huius
blandimenta postponere, & cum ipsa
perennis gloriæ sedem obtinere. Per
Dominum nostrum &c.

The Prayer.

A Lmighty and everlasting God, who
hast adorned Blessed Wenefride with
the reward of Virginitie; grant vs we be-
seech thee, through her pious interces-
sion, to set aside the delights of this
world, and obteyne with her, the throne
of everlasting glory. Through our Lord
Jesus Christ &c.

SEQUEN-

SEQUENTIA.

V Irgo vernans velut Rosa,
Agni Sponsa speciosa,
Martyr Christi pretiosa,
Wenefreda floruit.

Ex Britannis oriunda,
Fide firma, spe iocunda,
Actu sancta, mente munda,
Mundi mendâ caruit.

Hanc occidit *Carodocus*,
Quem mox sorbet Orci focus,
Qui prauorum extat locus,
Quo Sathan exuitur.

Huius argumento rei,
Fons ebullit nutu Dei,
Rubricatæ speciei,
Quo caput præciditur.

Mira multa hic patrantur,
Cæci vident, muti fantur,
Morbi omnes effugantur.
Cum fide petentium.

Gloriosa *Wenefreda*,
Maris fluctus nobis seda,
Ne fiamus hosti præda,
Pia fer præsidium: Amen.

The same in old English.

A S a sweete Rose in pleasant spring,
Of heavenly Lambe Spouse lovely faire
And Martyr deare of Christ our King
S. Wenefrede did flourish heere.

Descended well of Brittitish race,
In Fayth now firme, and Hope secure,
With workes Holy, and Soule in Grace,
From worldly filth persecuted pure.

This sacred Mayd did Cradocke kill,
And him Hell swallowed presently,
Where teares in vayne do run downe still
And Sathan burnes incessantly.

A Token sure of this strang thing,
Bespotted all with bloudy red,
A Well by Gods command doth spring
Where Tyrant fierce cut off her head.

Heere wōders great Gods hand doth worke
The blind do see, the dumbe do speake,
Diseases which in bodies lurke
Are cured, when Fayth is not weake.


O glorious Virgin Wenefrede,
To vs the raging sea appease,
And free vs so from Sathans dread
That he on vs may neuer seize. Amen.

THE



I
THE AVTHORS
OWNE PROLOGVE
TO THE LIFE
OF
S. WENEFRIDE.

To the right Reuerend Father, *Guari-
nus* Prior of *Worcester*, *Robert*, his
spirituall Sonne, Prior also vnwor-
thy of *Shrewsbury*, wisheth Grace
to walke vprightly in the way of
Gods Commandements.

INCE he who hath
receaued the least ta-
lent at Gods hands, is
bound charitably to imploy the

A same

same, in the service of him who
freely bestowed it, and to the
good of such as may be edified
and benefitted spiritually by it;
not hiding the same vnder a bu-
shell, or reseruing it to himselfe
alone, which will become the
more his owne by being charita-
bly communicated to others in a
holy imitation of our Redee-
mers bounties, and graces vpon
vs vniuersally bestowed: I haue
iustly feared, out of this respect,
to conceale from others, vnitied
in the same band of Christian
Faith, and Charity with me,
and particularly from your

Ve-

Venerable selfe, much respected by me, the Collection which I haue lately made of the Blessed Virgin S. Wenefrides life: the reading whereof, will, I doubt not, help much to increase and perfit heauenly piety, and loue eminently already, and exemplarly to many shining in You; delighted also to dilate the glory of God, & his Saints by workes like to this, which you haue by frequent letters, and earnest intreaties required of me.

I haue gathered the same, partly from the Ancient, and vndoubted Monuments of such

4 THE AVTHORS

Monasteries, and Churches as this Blessed Virgin is knowne to haue liued in, and partly from the relation of sundry Ancient Priests, for their great learning sanctity of life, and Religious profession, made Venerable, & worthy of all credit, in their assertions, and depositions vnto me.

Three causes haue moued me to publish the true knowledge of this Saints life, so by me attained vnto. The first, was a wholesome feare (as I haue said) to be reprovued by my Eternall Iudge, for hiding vnder ground,

and

and not imploying profitably as I ought the talent which he hath lent me. The second, was my especiall loue, and deuotion to this most renowned Virgin and Martyr of our Countrey, that by her sanctity, and great merits heere by me declared, she might by faithfull soules be the more deuoutely honoured, serued, and prayed vnto. The third, was a particular desire which I haue charitably had to edifie my owne Brethren, humbly in their deuotions, and instantly intreating this labour of me.

As for S. Wenefrides pre-

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tended

6 THE AUTHORS

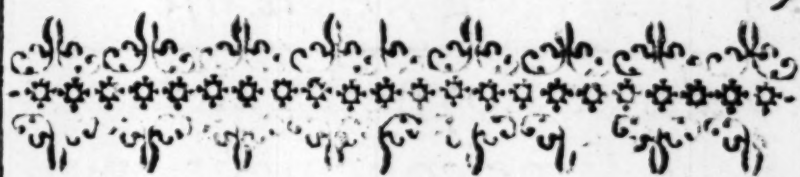
tended iourney to Rome, and other particulars vulgarly only, and by persons of no credit fabulously reported, I haue wholly omitted them; and forborne likewise to set downe some other certaine, and vndoubted relations, concerning her life, because I would not be tedious, and ouerlarge in my manner of writing: this which I haue heere gathered being sufficient, in my opinion, and yours also I hope, to declare the eminent sanctity and graces of this most sacred Virgin, by whose powerfull intercession, and your holy prayers, I hope to

re-

receave, at her heauenly spouses
hands, some small reward of
my labours, and paynes in this
worke undertaken.

THE





THE FIRST BOOKE,
 conteyning the History of
S. Wenefrids Life.

CHAPTER I.

*Of S. Beuno his great sancti-
 ty; how he was inspired by
 God to goe to S. Wenefrids
 Father; how liberally he was
 entertayned by him, and had
 his only child commended for
 her Education vnto him.*

IN the Westerne part of
 great Britanny, called

Wales, cōioyned Eastwards
in the same continent, with
England, and rounded on all
other sides with *Seuerne*, and
the *Ocean*, flourished in ti-
mes past innumerable Sain-
tes men and women of sin-
gular sanctity and merit, as
their seuerall Shrines, and
stately Monuments yet re-
mayning do testify; amongst
whome, in King *Eluith* the
second his tyme, one *S. Beu-*
no was for his wonderfull
graces especially renowned;
who hauing, out of a holy
desire to imitate the pouer-

ty

ty of his heauenly Lord,
and to become a true Pil-
grime heere on earth, for-
saken his owne Countrey,
and trodden vnder foote
such glorious pompes, and
pleasures of the world as he
might at home haue en-
ioyed, made himselfe first
a Moncke, and soone after
arriued to such perfection
and sanctity of life, that he
became a common Father
of Religious persons.

For no sooner had he
built a Church and Mona-
stery in one place, and settled

there-

there in regular discipline and great purity of life, a certaine number of Religious persons, but he traueled to another part of the Countrey, to do there the like also, as Gods holy spirit for the benefit of many, peculiarly directed him; so that at length he entred into the territory of a rich, & potent Lord called *Theuith* sonne to a chiefe Counsellour of the King, & a principal gouerner of the Couñtry, who equalled his Illustrious birth, by his Noble, Religious,

gious, & exemplar demeanours.

When Venerable *Beuno* came to this Lords house, he was most respectfully by him entertayned, and after charitable salutiōs passed betweene them, the Saint tould him, that he was sent by God to erect a Church in his Territory, as he had done in other places: and I doubt not (said he) but that God hath by a very feruent and peculiar inspiration, drawne me hither from his other seruants, with whome

I liued els where with great content, to performe some great good particularly for you, and yours. Wherefore for his diuine Maiesties seruice, I humbly intreate a small part of your ample inheritance, to rayse therein a Church, where others with my selfe will daily pray for your safety.

The Noble man moued with the Saintes Venerable aspect and speaches, resolved forthwith, to graunt what he asked, and yielded this wise answere vnto him:

With

With good reason, holy Father, am I bound to giue you a part of what Lands I possesse, for the seruice of him, who gaue all vnto me: and I conceaue indeed that you haue pleased me much, in asking this Charity of me, more profitable to my selfe, then to you. Wherefore this very Manour which now I liue in, I do from this tyme forward wholly alienate frō my selfe and all myne, yielding the possession, & all right thereof most gladly vnto you:

and

and hauing no more then one child, a tender Virgin, the greatest delight indeed, and worldly ioy of my hart, I will besides bequeath her to your holy instructions, and prayers, that her life may be holy, and her conuersation such, as may be pleasing to God, and contentfull to me also.

And hauing put the Saint in possession of the place, and promised moreouer to help him in the building by him intended, for a conuenient aboad of Gods

Reli-

Religious children and servants, he chose afterwards a place for himselfe to dwell in, vpon a high hill ouer against it, that when he could not inioy the holy mans presence, he might a far of looke at least towards him, and recreate himselfe often in the day, by being with him holily and continually imployed in the seruice of God, spiritually conioyned.

B

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

How S. Wenefrides Parents did help the Saint in building his Monastery; become also with their Daughter his devout Auditours and obedient children: How likewise S. Wenefride upon hearing S. Beuno's exhortations, resolved to leaue the world, and conserue her virginity, intreating him to mooue also her Parents thereunto.

VV Hen the Saint began to build
his

his Church and monastery the Lord *Thewith* did not faile with meanes liberally to further it; vouchsafing also many times to put his owne hands to this holy worke for the example of others, and the sooner to finish it, as a thing by him for the glory of God, and good of his owne scule, exceedingly desired. So as the Church was no sooner ray-
sed, and made fit for the holy man to preach, and offer the diuine Sacrifice in, but himselfe with his Wife and

*V*Venefride his Daughter,
were daily and deuoutely
present, at such holy exer-
cises, he obseruing still this
Custome to place his Child
at the Saintes feet whilst
he preached, willing her to
be attentue to his speeches.
VWhich became not fruit-
les in her soule, holily euen
then in her tender yeares,
and graciously prepared fer-
uently to practise in her life,
such heauenly documents
as from the Saints mouth
she continually learned.
And her delight in hearing
him

him was such, as with leaue of her Parents she often visited him alone by her selfe, to be enriched the more, with a profitable, and practicall knowledge of diuine verities from him.

And albeit her Parents, as their most gracious and only child, dearely affected her, and had placed (after a worldly manner) the only hope of their posterity in her, by resolving with an ample dowry to marry her in due tyme, to some Noble and chiefe person of the

Country; yet was it a thing most gratefull, and delightfull vnto them, to see her repayre often vnto the Saint, and to season her innocent Soule, as a cleane vessell ordayned by God to contayne afterwards a great measure of heauenly graces, with true piety taught vnto her by him, till at length her heauenly Spouse, by cleare illustrations, and ardent inspirations of his holy spirit, began to worke her sweetly for himselfe, & to make the very thought
of

of a worldly husband, hateful to her soule, beginning to be enamored of his owne diuine beauty, and resolved, if she could, by sanctity of life, and her virginity preserved, purely to enioy him.

But now a feare only by her humbly, and dutifully conceaued, of displeasing her Parents, by imparting this her purpose vnto them, troubled her very much, though daily therein more ardently, and vnalterably inflamed; till at length

in this doubtfull conflict,
betweene humane & diuine
loue passing in her thoughts,
the powerfull Illuminator,
and best Directour of holy
soules interiourly suggested
this counsell vnto her, that
by *Saint Beuno*, whose holy
speeches had occasioned
this pious resolution first in
her hart firmly then roo-
ted, to propose it vnto her
Parents, whose power and
authority she wisely knew
to be very great with them,
by reason they honoured
him much, and in all things
he

he said, gladly obeyed him. VVherfore one day finding him alone, after his manner holily retired, she humbly and boldly manifested her purpose thus vnto him.

Holy Father, I come here to make knowne vnto you the holy fruites of your speaches, and Gods graces togeather in my Soule, whereby I haue byn effectually, and (I hope) happily moued to estrange my selfe wholly from Worldly contentments, and to consecrate my Virginity purely

to him, who liberally gaue
me the beeing I haue, and
hath hitherto cōserued this
enriching Treasure graci-
ously in me; Humbly be-
seeching you, to obteyne for
me, my Parents good leaue
and permission so to conti-
nue. The Saint forthwith as
beyond all expression de-
lighted to know that the
seedes of diuine grace sowne
by his speeches, were be-
ginning to grow so happily
in her, willingly vnder-
tooke to obteyne of her
Parents what she desired
through

through the confidence which he had in their singular piety towards God, & readines to do what his diuine Maiesty would haue them.

CHAP. III.

S. Beuno *propoſeth* S. VVenefrides *deſire to her Parents, obteyneth their grant therein; they giue away in almes her intended dowry, & ioy to ſee rare beginnings of future ſanctity, and ſolide vertues in their Daughter.*

THe holy mā, a powerfull Oratour with the
who

who as Children reuerently respected, and desired to obey him, in a heauenly language imparted vnto them *S. VVenefrids* desires, and made them withall capable to know, that it would be no ordinary act of their due loue to God, gladly and freely to dedicate to his seruice what in this world was dearest vnto them. Their answere vnto him, with teares of ioy and praying of Christ for his graces afforded, so singularly, to their child, was no other
then

then a full, and free leaue
giuen to S. *Wenefride* of
forsaking the world to serue
her heauenly Spouse, who
by so high and holy a voca-
tion, had called her vnto
him.

And so wishing her a hap-
py progresse therein, they
resolved also to draw out of
the same this benefitt to
thēselues, that giuing away
to the poore, her ample
dowry for a secular maria-
ge by them prepared, and
distributing in holy vses
besides, a very great part of
their

their owne princely wealth
and possessions as trouble-
some vnto them, and (with
pouerty delighted) due to
the king of heauen, who by
espousing their Child was
growne to be heyre as it
were vnto them; they might
run more lightly the way of
his commandements, & in
a holy freedome frō world-
ly sollicitudes spend, & end
the remainder of their life
in gayning to themselues
heauenly treasures eternal-
ly to enrich them: wherein
they became animated af

ter-

terwards by the rare example of their daughters vertues; who ouer-ioyed at first with their leaue so obtayned, and freed from former feares of worldly entanglements, daily extended herselfe to courses of sanctity and perfection by frequent and feruent practises of humility, and punctuall obedience to her holy Father, permitted by her Parents freely vnto her.

So as now a corner neere his Cell where she might frequently visit him, and de-

light.

32 *The Admirable life*

lightfully drawe, through
her eares to her soule, the
vitall breath of his heauen-
ly discourses, was in the day
tyme her delightfullst mā-
fion : and watching whole
nights in the Church, knee-
ling or prostrate before the
Aultar, when extreme wea-
rines and deadly sleep did
not possesse her, was to be as
in her spouses bed-chāber,
raised by amorous thoghts
of his wonderfull Perfe-
ctions, and rapt with pure
delights, freshly euery day
communicated vnto her. So

as

as to heare him only named
caused a iubily in her soule,
by blushing and teares to
such as beheld her sweetely
discouered.

And as internall gifts
did wōderfully adorne her;
so were not externall graces
wanting vnto her: for her
face was matchles in bewty
and by a rare modesty ex-
ceedingly graced. Her spea-
ch was sweet, neuer but lea-
surely and wisely vttered.
The comly stature likewise
and proportion of her body
in all parts thereof, though

C

poore-

poorely clad serued to grace her in the eyes of others; so as the Diuell emulating those high beginnings of sanctity in her, and fearing withall what her example might worke in tyme, for the drawing of others to like courses of Perfection, he ceased not to lay many snares to intrappe her, and with new temptations ray-sed by others for her greater merit & glory at last, incessantly to try her; the beginning of which shall in my next Chapter be declared.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

How S. Wenefride was found alone by the Kings sonne in her Fathers house; and in daunger to haue byn viola- ted by him, escaped towards the Church, and was in the way cruelly beheaded for constantly refusing to yield her pure body vnto him.

S. Beuno hauing fully ended the fabrique of his Church, and consecrated the same to Christ, was daily

visited by great multitudes
of such as dwelled in places
neere him; & amongst them
S. VVinefreds holy Parents,
neuer fayled in his sacrifices
and sermons to heare him;
so as on a sunday whilst they
were in the Church, & their
daughter by some needfull,
or charitable occasion, con-
trary to her custome, detai-
ned at home, Prince *Crado-*
cus, king *Alan* his sonne, with
a lustful wicked purpose en-
tered the house, pretending
that he came to speake with
the Lord *Theuib* her Father.

The

The Holy Maid, suspecting no worse of him at first, after courteous salutations passed betweene them, and excuses by her humbly made, of being alone, vnattired, and vnable in her Parents absence fitly to intertayne him as his Princely dignity required, intreated him with all, to repose himselfe in a more conuenient roome of the house, till after diuine seruice ended, her Father should returne, and be free to speake with him. To which simple

candor and plainenes of her
speaches gracefully vttered,
the Prince inturiated with
loue of her faire person, and
lustfull desires presently to
inioy her, replied, that he
would willingly expect the
returne of her Parents, if
herselfe in meane time wold
be pleased to consent vnto
his will, so deuoted vnto her
that for the fauour then ex-
pected from her, he would
according to his Birth, and
Power, euer afterwarde be
ready to honour and serue
her: threatning withall, pre-
sently

sently to rauish her, if she yielded not willingly to his motion.

The holy Virgin though trembling for feare, & blushing at the immodesty of his speeches, yet lost not her wits in so needfull an occasion; but present with herselfe, & diuinely also at that instant assisted, she humbly and patiētly answered him, that she doubted not of enioying honour, wealth, and worldly contentment by being espoused to so Princely a person: but because (said

she) the present poore attire wherein you haue so on the sodaine taken me , suiteth not to so high a motion , or indeed becometh your preséce, giue me leaue, I beleech you , to enter my chamber heere by, presently to alter it .

To which her request (albeit with some loathnes to be delayed in his purpose) he yielded his consent : so that she now finding herself in her chamber , freed out of his hands, and hopeles of any rescue or succour to be

other-

otherwise affoorded her, ran out by a backe way , as fast as she could , towards the Church , where her Father and his people would , she doubted not, be able to saue her. But he impatient in his desires , and suspecting indeed that which happened , brake into the roome , and finding her not there , pursued her so hastily in her flight, as on a hill side neere the Church he furiously apprehended her, vowing with his sword drawne in his hand, & a countenance full

of wrathtul indignation that if forthwith she consented not to his will, so full of honourab'e loue towards her, he wou'd strike of that head from her body, & deforme that face therein, which formerly he had loued.

Whereunto the holy Virgin (as another. *S. Agnes* to her carnall Louer) vndauntedly replied, that she had holily espoused herselfe, & that also with her Parents consent, to the king of Heauens sonne, in power, beauty, and goodnes incomparably

bly exceeding him; and vpon his experienced loue towards her, she would euer remaine to him so faythfully, constantly, and vnalteredly deuoted in the affections of her hart, as she wold gladly loose her head and life, for refusing to admit any corriuall togeather with him. Neither shall your terrours (said she) or threats draw me from the sweetnes of his Loue, or make me not go, as I haue promised, purely vnto him.

Whereupon he, in a fu-

rious

rious scorne to be slighted
so by her, & knowing with-
all that whilst she liued the
vehemency of his loue could
not be asswaged, gaue her
with his sword so deadly a
stroake on the neck, as her
head thereby and body be-
came instantly parted; the
body falling without the
Church dore, and the head
within it; so as the floore
therof being somewhat de-
clining, as built in the han-
ging of a hill, it tumbled
towards the people, knee-
ling together before the

Aultar,

Aultar, astonishing them with the sight thereof no lesse, the afterwards it made them worthily to wonder, in seeing a cleere and plentiful spring newly then beginning to run out of the ground in the same place, where her head had first fallen vpon; visited since that time by holy pilgrimes from places farre & neere, and by miraculous graces, and cures frequently affoarded to sickely, and grieued persons, famously renowned.

CHAP. V.

The lamentations made at S. Wenefrids death, as well by the people as by her Parents; how likewise S. Beunc procured by his prayers a dreadful reuenge of her death vpon the Author thereof glorying in his cruelty: and then putting the head & body together, sought to obteyne of God, her returne to life againe.

THE people moued
with so dolefull a spe
ctacle,

ctacle, as was the virgins head, bloud, and body, before them, ceased not without-cryes to expresse their griefe and anger together towards him that committed so haynous an outrage. Her Parents likewise called by their cryes to the place, lamented the losse of their holy sweet child, lying butchered so villainously, and vnexpectedly before them, with more then imaginable expressions of sorrow.

S. Beuno in like manner, now ready to celebrate, lea-

uing

uing the aultar, and approaching to the doore, was wholly dissolued into teares of compassion and grieve to behold his deare Pupill and child, lying so cruelly murdered, before her consecration to Christ, solemnly soone after by him intended: and beholding in this his grieve, her Murderer standing proudly by, & wiping his bloudy sword on the grasse, so far from repenting him of the deed, without feare of God or man, as he gloried proudly therein,

with

with the holy virgins head
in his hand he went towards
him; and looking him in
the face, said vnto him.

Thou wicked man, for
as much, as without re-
gard of innocency or beau-
ty, thou hast murdered a
Princely Virgin, no lesse
noble then thy selfe, and art
not, as thou oughtest to be,
sorry aswell for the horrible
sacriledge, as foule murder
heere committed detestably
by thee; I do heere beseech,
my heauenly Lord, for the
example of others at least,

D

to

to execute presently , his
dreadfull Iudgment against
thee who hast murdered his
spouse, troubled his people,
violated his Saboath , and
besprinkled with bloud this
holy House, to his honour
and seruice consecrated by
me .

And the effect of his
words , to the terrour and
wonder of all present, was
such, as the Prince fell dead
sodaynely before him ; and
which increased the asto-
nishment of the people, his
dead body was presently ei-

ther

ther swallowed vp by the earth, or taken away by Diuels, so as no signe thereof afterwards appeared.

This done, S. Beuno often kissing the virgins dead face, and bathing it with his teares, put it to her body, & coueringe them with his cloake, after he had breathed in her mouth, prepared himselfe to goe to the Aultar, warning the people and her Parents especially, to cease their lamentations, & conuert the into prayers to the Creatour of soules, &

the sole rayser of bodies after death, that he would be mercifully pleased, as he called *Lazarus* to a new life rotten before, and stincking in his graue; so to rayse this Princely Spouse heere butchered for her loue towards him: and this chiefly for the glory of himselfe, edification of his people, and comfort of her parents, who so freely before had dedicated her, in purity of life perpetually to serue him.

CHAP. VI.

*How S. Wenefride was ray-
sed from death to life, and
her Head reunited to her bo-
dy by S. Beuno's prayers,
with a small white circle re-
mayning in the place of her
Necke where it was cut; &
other wonders gracing stil the
place of her Martyrdome.*

After the holy mā had
ended his Masse, and
the people their prayers, lif-
ting vp his hands towards
heauen, he prayed in this

manner : O Lord Iesus-Christ, for whose sake this holy Virgin contemned the world, and coueted heauenly things; vouchsafe by the tender bowels of thy mercy, loue, and bounty, to graunt vs the effect of our vowes now made, & prayers offered heere humbly vnto thee : and albeit we are fully perswaded, that this Godly Virgin who liued holily, & dyed constantly for thee, be now highly exalted in heauen also with thee, wanting no more the society of vs

mor-

mortall & miserable Creatures; yet to manifest thyne Omnipotency, and that supreme dominiõ which thou hast ouer soules and bodies, neuer dead to thy power of rayling & reuniting them; for the greater merit also of her soule, whose body heere lyeth before vs, we craue a new life for her, and that she may returne, after a long & plentifull haruest, of new merits heere gayned, more enriched & diuinely beautified vnto thee, the beloued of her Hart, and Eternall

Spouse, who with the Father
and the holy Ghost, doest
rule in earth, and raigne in
heauen, for euer and euer.

And when the people had
cryed with great deuotion,
Amen vnto his prayer, the
Virgin as newly wakened
from sleep, wiped her eyes
& face, besmeared with sweat
and dust before, as hauing
tumbled on the ground, fil-
ling all present, and her Pa-
rents there amongst them,
with ioy and adiniration;
obseruing also, as they more
fixedly beheld her, a pure
white

white circle, no bigger then a small threed, to remayne in her faire Necke, shewing the place where it had ben cut off before, and was miraculously then to her body conioyned; which because it euer afterwards remayned cōspicuously seene after the same manner, *Brewa*, her name before, is said to haue ben changed by the peoples great veneration, and loue towards her, into *Wenefride* by *Wen*, which doth signify *white* in the old British tongue, added vnto it, & 2.

letters thereof, for better
sound quite altered. And in
many apparitions of her to
men, and women after her
second corporall death, au-
thentically recounted, this
white Circle in her necke
conspicuously appeared; to
giue worldly soules thereby
to vnderstand, the particu-
lar glory which she had re-
ceaued of her heauēly spouse
for suffering that wound, so
constantly for him.

And whereas the valley
where she was martyred,
had ben called euer before a

dry

dry or barren bottome, it was for the Christall fountayne of pure waters, breaking miraculously out of the ground where her head first fell, called afterwards in memory of this miracle, *Finhon*, which in old Welsh doth signify a fountayne or well: & indeed as this fountayne was wonderfull in the first origen therof, so did the same by miraculous cures of men & beasts, either bathed in that water, or drinking therof, become famously afterwards, renowned.

In

In memory likewise, that store of the Virgins pure bloud had ben spilt in that place, and to signify withall how sweet a Sacrifice was offered there by her; the stones of the Well, are either dyed, or spotted all ouer with drops, as it were, of bloud; and the mosse growing about it, is, as with muske yet to this day sweetly perfumed.

The miracle of her raising frō death to life diuulged in those partes, gayned to *S. Beuno* so great a fame of

his

his singular sanctity, and power with God to obteyne any thing, that multitudes thereupon of Gentil people in those dayes, for their instruction in the Christian fayth and Baptisme, repayed vnto him: whose famous acts, and S. *Wenefrids* holy life after her being raysed, shall in the rest of this booke be briefly declared.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

How S. Wenefride was solemnly veyled by S. Beuno, and fully instructed in the true knowledge & holy practise of a Religious life. How likewise he tooke his leaue afterwards of her, prophetically fortelling the sanctity of her life, and her gayning to Christ of many soules.

S. Wenefride, as another Lazarus restored to a new life, with a fresh fervour of heauenly loue and
deuo-

deuotion, applyed herselfe to learne from so great a maister as *S. Beuno* was, how to rayse her already-illuminated soule to the height of Religious Perfection, choosing for that purpose to sit at the Saints feet, as *S. Mary Magdalen* did at the feet of our Sauour, neuer satiated with the delicacies, which fell from that heauenly Table vnto her, by his most pious speeches, and deuout instructiōs; & within a smal tyme out a restless and most amorous desire, fully to be

vnited to her louely and diuine Spouse, she obteyned of him (as professed Virgins were wont to be, in those primitiue tymes of Gods church) to be solénly veiled, her singular vertues & graces supplying the wāt of yeares, for that Religious ceremony Canonically required.

The Saint therefore desirous to affoord her that comfort, and knowing her to be very worthy therof, called her Paréts vnto him, to acquaint them with his
intent

intent of giuing vnto her the holy veyle of Chastity with their approbation and consent: which they, as deuout & godly persons, with all humble respects vnto him the Author of her second life, and with imbracings of their holy Child, most gladly agreed vnto; & which was afterwards in a great assembly of people most solemnely, and religiously performed.

After which blessing by her obteyned, the holy man as diuinely foreknowing, to

E

what

what an height of sanctity & perfection the spirit of God, for the glory of himselfe & good of others, intended to raise her, sought more and more to illuminate her soule by heauenly documents, & practicall lessons, for the direction of herselfe, & others in a spirituall and Religious life; which she as a very apt scholler did not only learne, but practise also in such a manner, that the Saint was ouerioyed to behould her.

And finally finding her fully enabled not only to
guide

guide herseife, but others also, in courses of Perfection, he called her Parents one day vnto him, and tould them, that as they had liberally graunted vnto him a Church, and house for the seruice of God, and help of his seruants: so had his diuine Maiesty liberally requited their Charity towards him, by singular graces affoarded to them, and especially to their Childe, whom now they might well choose, and propose vnto themselues, as a Mistresse

able to guide them in their Redeemers seruice , and as a bright shining patterne of religious Perfection. Wherefore being diuinely called to another place , I must heere (said he) leaue you to the helpes of Heauenly Graces , which will not be wanting vnto you, persisting as now you do holily in Gods seruice , and to the carefull direction of your Daughter .

And then , conuerting himselfe to *S. VVenefride* : Our Lord (said he) deare
Child,

Child, hath appointed you to succeed me heere in my holy labours, and abiding in these parts, to go onwards happily your self, & to guide others fruitfully, in the way to eternall life, as hitherto I haue taught you. And doubt not, but by the moving example of your death for him already susteyned, and the holy conuersation of your life, you wilbe able to performe what I haue said; and in this very place, gather together for your heauenly spouse, many pure

and deuout Virgins, guided vnto him holily by you.

But know withall, that you shal not heere end your dayes, but that after seauen yeares, in prayer and penance spent in this place, to your owne great Merit, & singular edification of others, our gracious Lord will call you to another, that strangers also may in the knowledge and true seruice of him be illuminated by you: and know also that heerby your memory shall become glorious in future
ages,

ages, and your merits published to the whole world, by miraculous cures, & helpes affoorded vnto sickly, and distressed persons praying vnto you.



CHAP. VIII.

Wherein is declared S. Wenefrides grieve for her Holy Fathers departure, and his comfortable speeches unto her, concerning particular Graces intended by God towards herselfe, and others by her.

THe Godly Virgin being excessively grieved at her holy Fathers departure, he to comfort her in so deep an affliction, tooke her by the right hand, and
lead

lead her to the fountayne
which miraculously had ri-
sen in the tyme, & place of
her martyrdome, & sitting
togeather vpon a stone neere
to the side of the well, called
therefore to this day S. Ben-
no's stone; You see (said he)
heere the monumēt of your
sufferings, and behold also
the stones therein steyned
as with your bloud, shed
for your Heauenly Spouses
sake; be you therefore now
attentive, and mindfull of
what I shall fore-tell you
concerning three especiall

Graces, whereby your Glorious spouse Christ Iesus will heerafter honour your selfe, and benefit others by you.

The first of them is, that these said Stones, shall neuer be washed from their bloody steynes, but euer retayne the same, as triumphant signes, and glorious testimonies of your blood, in defence of your Chastity most gratefully heere effused.

The second shalbe, that neuer any person who shall deuoutely aske any

tempo-

temporall blessing, as freedom aswell from corporall as spirituall distresses, to be obteyned by your merits & prayers for them, but that in three times so doing they shall assuredly be made partakers of their desire; or passing by death out of this life, they shall in another world reap after a more ample manner the fruit of their prayers, by heauenly blessings, through your intercessions for them, diuinely prepared.

The third shalbe, that af-

ter

ter my departure now from
you, into a remote part of
this Iland, God will giue me
a Cell neere the sea shore, &
when you would send any
letters, or tokens vnto me
(as his diuine Maiesty wold
haue you to do, and I also
do intreate the same of you
once at least every year) cast
them only in the streame of
this fountayne, and they
will, passing into the Ocean
by many creekes, and tur-
ning-shores, be diuinely, &
safely directed vnto me :
which graces likewise to the
worlds

worlds end shall be diuulged gloriously of you.

And hauing ended this his speach, he led her backe againe vnto the Church, and said then vnto her: Behould heere this Church, & lodgings about it, which hauing byn built by the charitable magnificence of your parents, and my labours, I leaue vnto you, to be conuerted into a copious monastery of Chast, & Deuout Virgins, who moued by your instruction, & holy example of life, shall to-

gca-

geather with your selſe, meritoriously practiſe thoſe heauenly documēts, which, by a perſe contempt of the world, and a full abnegation of theſelues (the two maine grounds of Religious perfection) I haue often deliuered by my ſpeeches vnto you.

Stupendious miracles alſo done for the temporall & eternall good of many, repaying to this very place, ſhall heerafter be effected, to the prayſe of their heauenly Maker , and euen bruite beaſts ſhall not want

their

their share in such blessings;
strive therefore, deare Child
to exhibit your selfe in all
things, as a liuely patterne,
and example to others of all
Vertue. As for my poore
selfe, I shall goe whither
Gods spirit will guide me, &
ever retayne in my hart and
soule, a Fatherly and louing
memory of you.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of the continuance of S. Wenefrides grieve for the departure of S. Beuno; and how he tooke lastly his leave of her. VVho beginning afterwards to practise what he had taught her, gathered many Noble mens daughters vnto her, and liued in eminent sanctity, as Gouvernesse of the rest.

TH E more S. Beuno did seeke by sweete speeches to comfort his loving

louing Child, the more was her grieve for his absence increased, especially when she saw him with his staffe in his hand ready to go from her, sweetly venting her sorrows in such sort as others might heare her, speaking thus vnto him,

Now holy Father am I to be left alone, as a poore Orphane Child without a Nurse, or as a silly sheep among rauinous wolues without a Pastour to defend me; wheras with you I was most safe, alwayes ioyfull in your

presence, alwayes edified by your example, & instructed by your speeches. Which words of hers, together with her flowing teares so moued the Saint himselfe, as also her louing Parents, and others that were present, as not to haue their owne sorrow, by staying longer with her, increased, after he had blessed her with his hand, (as hauing no toung through griefe to speake a word more vnto her) hastned his pace faster then modesty would permit her to follow him,

vntill

untill at length he was gone quite out of her sight, neuer more in this world to behold him; so that returning with her companiōs homeward, for many dayes after she remayned in her sorrow, till tyme at length, & discret thoughts hauing eased her hart, she wisely and maturely, began to reflect vpon his heauenly discourses and lessons formerly giuen vnto her, both how she might practise them herselfe, and draw others also to the exercise therof.

Which in a short tyme,
Gods grace and the force of
her holy Example, did so
happily effect, that a great
number of Noble and de-
uout Virgins, trampling
worldly wealth, Honours &
pleasures vnder their feet,
for the glory and seruice of
Christ, betooke themselves
to her gouernment, & liued
in religious discipline ho-
lily vnder her; commanding
or teaching them nothing
but what herselfe practised
first amongst them, as a shi-
ning cleere Light, in safe
paths

paths of sanctity, to guide them; yea with such a sweet mildenes, & motherly loue towards them, that with equall merit, and contentment they obeyed her commands, and obserued such rules as she had established amongst them.

Her wholesome aduises also they receaued as heauēly oracles; & such remedies as in their difficulties, & temptations she wisely & compassionably gaue them, had a heauenly kind of force presently to free them. Mi-

racles likewise were not
sometymes wanting to in-
crease her authority, and to
testify her sanctity vnto
them; so that their respect
and loue towards her, cau-
sed all to strue who should
excell in imitating the rare
vertues, which daily more
and more they discovered
in her holy example of life,
beeing as a sweet odour,
wherby perfect soules come
to draw others vnto Christ
with them.

CHAP. X.

Of the Fame, and effects of S. Wenefrides sanctity of life in numbers of soules gayned vnto Christ by her. Of the first giust also which she sent miraculously to S. Beuno.

TH E wonderfull fame of *S. VVenefrids* sanctity, increased also by miraculous cures, vpon persons diseased done frequently & apparently by her, was not contayned within the limits only of the country where

she dwelt, but far and neere
against her will, began to be
so diuulged, from very re-
mote places of the kingdom;
so as many flocked to see, &
speake with her, and were so
edified by her Angelicall
behauour, & wise speeches
vnto them, that they were
very loath to leaue her cō-
pany, and accounted those
people blessed who liued,
alwayes neere her.

But most of all the holy
Virgins that were placed
vnder her care, & domestical
gouernment, reputed them-

selues

selues happy, by hauing for their Guide, no lesse tender a Mother in her deare loue towards them, then a wise mistresse by instruction and example holily to direct them, as her holy Father had formerly taught her; towards whome during her life, she euer retayned a most gratefull memory of her present life, and a thousand blessings besides receaued from him. In particular also she forgot not the yearly token she had promised to send him.

Wherefore partly with her owne hands, and partly by the help of her sisters, she had imbrodered a faire vestemēt to send vnto him, and hauing in the beginning of the month of May, almost a yeare after his departure, finished the same, wrapping it vp in a wollen cloath, she went with her sisters, & many others to the welside, where casting it into the water, she said; O holy Father I send heere according to your command & my promise, this smal token
of

of my loue vnto you.

The which , to the great wōder of many viewing the same, as it passed by the well streame downe into the Riuer , and so into the sea, remayned dry , and no whit moistned by the water : So that in a short tyme , being diuinely directed, it was cast on the shoare 50. miles off hard by the Monastery , where the holy man liued, and he casually going forth tooke it vp, wōdring at first what it should be , till at length opening the bundle
and

and remēbring his charge giuen to S. V Venefride before his departure, he ioyfully conceaued it to be her guift, gratefully mindfull of his loue towards her; and ioyed therein much more afterwards, when the wonderfull sanctity, and fruites of her life were reuealed vnto him; as she also diuinely knew that he had safely receaued it.

The vestment he ordained to be kept carefully in the Church, for the vse of himselfe and his Brethren,

to celebrate holy masse in ;
&renuing often by the sight
therof, his wonted loue and
prayers for her , he became
in them illuminated againe,
and prophetically assured,
that her owne graces should
be eminent , and the fruites
very great which by her ho-
ly life, & exāple to the glory
of God, & good of others,
should be wrought , both
where she liued, and in ma-
ny other places, as formerly
he had byn inspired to tell
her .

CHAP. XI.

Of the great Talents which Christ gaue unto S. Wenefride for the good of others; and how she yearely remembered to send her token to S. Beuno, untill, to her great grieve, she had his holy end reuealed unto her; soone after which, she changed the place of her aboad, as he had foretold her.

Albeit many Graces were worthily admired in his holy Virgin, by
those

those who knew, and conversed with her, as her high & lasting vnion with God in extaticall prayer, her great austeritie, her Angelicall purity and innocency of life, her powerfull authority in commanding her subiects, with admirable humility and sweetnes conioyned; yet nothing was more wonderfull in her, then the deep knowledge of heauenly verities, and ardent zeale of her Creatours glory, still manifested in her exhortations to her owne subiects, &

speeches

speeches to strangers that came to visit her; so as she did fill their harts more with enflamed desires to serue Almighty God, then their eares with the sound of her wordes : euer attributing the graces of her soule first to Christ, & next to *S. Beuno* his Great seruāt and her Teacher, to whome she euery yeare sent her promised token, or present after the manner aforesaid, vntill his holy death, and circumstances thereof were reuealed vnto her; whose

losse

losse she frequently afterwards deplored, albeit she had ben diuinely assured, that according to his wonderfull merits heere on earth, he was in heauenly ioyes, highly exalted: the particulars of whose holy life from his Childhood till his death, and great miracles afterwards, are authentically recorded in his yet extant and certaine monuments.

After whose glorious dis-
cease, she began to feele
most perfect desires in her-

G lse,

selfe, for the greater glory of God and benefit of soules in other places, to remoue from the monastery where she liued, especially now seeing her sisters well able to liue holily & religiously without her. So that in the end of the seauenth yeare of her gouernment, as the Saint had foretold her, she tooke leaue of her spirituall Children, Parentes, and other friends thereabouts, all afflicted aboue measure, at the losse of her gratefull, & profitable presence amongst
them;

them; and together with one of her companions intended to goe whither the spirit of God should be pleased to direct her: visiting also deuoutly before her departure, the place of her owne martyrdome, & there prostrate on her knees, in humble & feruent prayer she besought Almighty God, that he would according to his blessed will, direct her in that iourney for his honour intended, and to increase withall his blessings vpon such as frequented

that place, in a deuout memory of her martyrdome there for him susteyned; the which effect of her prayer was by his diuine Maieſty accordingly graūted as hath ben testified ſince by numberleſſe miracles wrought at that Well, or Fountaine, in curing the bodily & ſpirituell infirmities of all hūble Clients and ſuppliantſ in that place vnto her.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

How S. Wenefrid was directed by God in her iourney to a holy mā called Deifer, whose Counsell she was willed to follow: of whom many things are by the Author occasionally heere recounted; and how worthy he was to be chosen by God, for S. Wenefrides Directour in the place of S. Beuno.

S. *Wenefride* hauing in earnest prayer recommended her iourney to God,

was inspired to goe with her companion, to one *Deiser* a holy Man, living at *Bota-war*, who should further direct her. This man was indeed, for his Sanctity in those dayes, & miraculous testimonies therof, famously renowned; for by his prayers he had raised out of the ground a goodly spring in a place that was dry before, & obteyned likewise of God, that the water thereof should haue a supernaturall force to cure all soares & diseases of such as did drinke
ther.

therof, or wash their soares
therewith .

And amongst many miracles besides recounted of him whilst he liued, this one performed after his death is especially renowned, to wit, of two Theeues who hauing stolne two horses out of his Churchyard, posted with them most speedily out of the Coûtrey: but the next day the owners finding the gone, humbly prostrated themselves before the Saintes Aultar, and presented therat two Candels for the

recouery of their horses, beseeching him to accept of the vnlighted as they were, since they had no fire there present to kindle them.

This faithfull piety of theirs so pleased the Saint, that the Candels were vpon the suddayne miraculously lighted to testify that he graciously heard them: & the theeues after they had ridde their horses as they thought far from the place found themselues brought backe againe vnto it, & that not once but the second

tyme

tyme also ; so as the men ha-
uing prayed there all night,
early in the morning as they
came out of the Church,
they very ioyfully saw their
horses, held by two stran-
gers wholly confounded at
their theft: wherfore they
gladly seizing on them, &
humbly thanking the Saint
by whose merits they had
obteyned that blessing, they
dismissed also the theeues
for his sake, without infli-
cting any punishment (as
their fault deserued) vpon
them. Which miracle I haue

purposely heere recounted,
that my Reader may know
the merits & great sanctity
of blessed *Deifer*, to whom
S. VVenefride, for the know-
ledge of her iourney, was
diuinely directed.



CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

How S. Wenefride came to the Holy man Deifer, and after she had bin charitably welcommed, and entertayned by him for one night, she was the next morning sent, for a further direction, to another Saint called Saturnus, dwelling at Henthlant.

THe holy Virgin after due inquiry made, where the Village *Botauar* stood, and of her way vnto it, committing to God her
mona-

Monastery at *Finbon*, and friends there about, began with her companion cherefully her iourney towards Blessed *Deifers* Cell, eight miles distant; where at her arriual, she was by the Saint charitably welcomed; and hauing related the cause of her comming, and how she had byn diuinely in her prayer, directed vnto him, he tould her that concerning either herselfe, or her iourney, God had not as then reuealed any thing vnto him: But haue patience

(said

(said he) a little this night,
to stay heere at my cell, and
his diuine maiesty the whilst
will vouchsafe perchance
to reueale his holy pleasure
vnto me.

Whereunto she humbly
and thankfully agreed, as
being confidently assured,
that Almighty God had not
vainely, and to no purpose,
directed her vnto him.

The Saint, as his manner
was, praying the whole
night, a heauenly voyce to-
wards the morning saying
thus vnto him; Tell *VVene-*

fride

fride my Virginall deare Daughter, that she goe forthwith to a village called *Hentblant* where she shall be partly satisfied in her desire, for there she shall find a Venerable man called *Saturnus*, by whome she shall be more fully instructed, about the place of her abode during life, and what she shall do in it.

So that early in the morning *S. Deifer* calling the holy Virgin his guest, concealed nothing of what had been revealed vnto him, and

dire-

directing her the way towards *Saturnus* his Cell, willed her cheerefully to goe on; for that holy neighbour of mine (said he) will be diuinely enabled to tell you, not only of your iourney, and place to goe vnto, but of other things also, belonging to you.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

How Saturnus entertayned S. Wenefride in his Cell, and telling her, how much God should be honoured by her, he directed her to a holy place called Guitherin, where she should find one Elerius, a Blessed Abbot of religious men to direct her, and a monastery of chaste Virgins, who would gladly submit themselves unto her.

*S. VVenefride much reioy-
cing at the direction
which*

which Bleſſed *Deiſer* had giuen her, and confirmed in her comfortable perſuaſion that Chriſt the Author of her iourney, would not in his care and protection be wanting vnto her, humbly and thanckfully tooke her leaue of him, and went on forwards with her compa- niō towards *Henthlant* where *Saturnus* remayned.

Comming thither ſhe was moſt charitably receaued by him, as hauing bin, con- cerning herſelfe and her iourney, before hand diui-

H nely

nely instructed; and causing her to remayne that night in prayer, and holy conferences with him, he gaue vnto her (to her great comfort) many heauenly & holy lessons, and towards the morning he told her, that there was a place, not far off called *Guitherin*, stored with the pretious reliques of many Saints who had formerly liued there, in great holines of life, and deerenes vnto God, blessing the place for them; and for that cause greatly reuerenced by de-

uout

uout people repaying vn-
to it. This place (said he) is
destined by God for your
earthly habitation, and to
be sanctified more by you;
where also you shall find a
holy Abbot called *Elerius*,
of so great mortification,
prayer, & vnion with God,
as the world, and all con-
tentments therof are who-
ly dead vnto him.

To this Man then am I
willed to send you, and to
tell you with all, that you
shall find there a heavenly
tranquillity of mind, and a

Monastery of chaste Virgins, trayned vp from their Infancy in vertue, liuing also now holily togeather, yet ordeyned by God to be ray- sed by your holy Example and Instructions to higher and perfecter wayes of gay- ning sanctity and religious perfe ction; and they will in time, for that end, humbly and gladly be ready to submit themselues vnto you, as to a Mother and Abbess, sent by their Heauenly spouse purposely vnto them.

CHAP. XV.

How S. Wenefride going to Elerius, was in the way, saluted most charitably by him; how also after they had spent a whole night in prayer togeather, she was led by him to the monastery of Virgins, and there after high prayſes uttered of her, she was commended as a companion diuinely ſent vnto them.

S. *Wenefride replenished with incredible ioy at Saturnus ſpeeches vnto her,*

especially in hearing how holy a place she was going vnto, and that she should find there a Monastery of chaste virgins to liue withal, desired to know of him the way thitherward, crauing withall his holy blessing for the better speed of her iourney.

The Holy man, guiding her himselfe some part of the way, for the great reuerence he bare towards her, after he had giuen her his blessing, caused his Deacon to accompany her through-

out

out the whole iourney to *Elerius*, who being diuinely forewarned of her coming, and all other particulars of her life, met her for honours sake vpon the way, and after he had led her into the Church, and prayed a while with her, he imbraced her in a fatherly louing manner, bidding her be of good comfort: for, said he, (taking her a part from the Deacon, and her Companion). I haue already diuinely vnderstood of your noble Virginitie, with other

gracefull signes of your martyrdome , in the place thereof yet remayning, and will be gladly ready to help you , in the caule of your journey vnto me.

Whereunto *S. Venefride* replyed , that she had nothing more concerning herselfe to tell him , but that as she had ben by Gods holy spirit guided vnto him, so would she be hūbly ready to receaue his further directions , and be in the future course of her life an obedient Child , and Schol-

ler

ler vnto him.

The Saint by this her humble and modest answer being exceedingly edified, tould her, that they would if she pleased, spend that night in holy prayer together, for their surer direction, in so important an occasion: and he hauing receaued towards the morning, new illuminatiōs from heaven about her, replenished with excessiue ioy, he rose from his prayer, and hartily imbracing her, willed her to be confident, that God

H 5

would

would not be wanting in the wonted effects, and gracious increasing of his Fatherly love towards her; & so leading her out of the Church to the Monastery of Virgins governed by him, he made this speech vnto them.

Deare Children of God, reioyce, for that your heavenly spouse hath sent a new star of wonderful brightness to shine heere among you, & prouided such a companiō for you, as wil with new treasures of merited graces

enrich

enrich her owne soule, and yours also by the many rare examples, and high practises of religious Perfection, which from tyme to tyme she will exhibit profitably, and holily vnto you.

For this is *Wenefride* that renowned Virgin, whome you haue heard to haue suffered a glorious death, for her virginity defēded. This is she, whose Triumphs are sung in Churches, and her Trophies do yet illustrate the whole Prouince which she dwelled in. This is she

who

who in her martyrdom and Confession, is equally glorious, and now is come to liue holily, and to dye happily amongst you, as hauing already a high place amōgst the most glorious Martyrs of heauen reserved for her.

Reioyce therefore worthily at her fortunate arri- uall, and keep safely so hea- uenly a Treasure amongst you. Marke well and imitate diligently the rare example of her life: forget not like- wise those heauenly lessons which she will giue you, out

of

of a holy desire , to leade
you, with herselfe vnto the
height of religious merit &
perfection; for which only
reason Christ hath sent her
to increase also the alrea-
dy renowned glory of this
place , by liuing heere a-
mongst you .



CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the commendation which the Saint made of S. Wenefride to the old Abbess of the Monastery; and how she quickly there deserved his praises by her eminent, and heroicall Vertues.

S. Elerius hauing spoken so much of her sanctity generally to all the sisters of the Monastery together, conuerted his speech vnto the Venerable old Abbess called *Theonia*, a very holy

wo-

woman, saying thus vnto her.

To you, most deare Mother, I recommend especially the respectfull entertaynement of this sacred and deare spouse of Christ, sent (as I say once againe) diuinely vnto you, wherby you may gather how highly she is to be honored by you; & ioy withall that the Author of all graces hath in sending her hither so louingly regarded you: & with this he departed, leauing *S. VVenefrid* amongst them, who suitably

to

to his high prayles, began to shine in her wonderfull perfections, and by heroi- call acts of vertue to infuse a new Charity amongst thé, easily by all discerned, & by the Abbessé especially, who was no raw beginner in regular and holy courses.

Her abstinence (they noted) was admirable , her prayer cōtinuall when charitable occasions interrupted not the same, & very often extaticall; a profound Humility in all her gestures and speeches plainly appeared,

peared, neuer praying herselfe, and sensibly troubled when others for any thing did extoll her. Patience the first fruite of Charity, as *S Paul* reckoneth it, seemed to haue possessed so fully her hart, and so firmly settled the affections thereof, as all Anger, Enuy, and other disordinate Passions of that kind were wholly dead vnto her.

Her Commands had euer such sweetnes and discretion conioyned, as it delighted all the other to do whatsoe-

uer she, at *Theonia's* intreaty commanded them, especially when they noted herselfe in hard offices to goe before them. And when she spake either of sacred Verities or of vertuous Practises vnto them, the feeling seruour of diuine loue flamed not only in her soule, but a great depth of heauēly wisdomē appeared plainly in her words also, & wrought the like effects in such as heard them; so as Reuerence and Loue were quickly by all yielded vnto her.

Theo-

Theonia the Abbess also as more illuminated, to know, and delight in her graces, did often confer priuately with her, alwayes learning at such tymes new lessons of sanctity from her. And seldome did they so conferre togeather of sacred Mysteries, Ioyfull, or Dolorous, but that both their harts, with loue and compassion equally possessed, caused teares to flow frō their eyes in abundance, and their loud sobbings to interrupt their discourse; so as the one

ioyed in her deuout scholler
and the other was no lesse
pleased in hauing such a Mi-
stresse, so diuinely prepared
by Christ, for her.



CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

How S. Elerius experiencing S. Wenefrids great wisdom and Vertue in many conferences with her, preached her sanctity to his Brethren; And of the many people, who moved with the fame of her Martyrdome and holy life, came from places farre and neere, to see, and speake with her.

S. Elerius living with his Monks, not far off, in a most retired, austere and de-

uout manner, delighted many tymes to visit the holy Virgin in her Monastery, discoursing of heauenly mysteries and vertuous Practises with her; and found her so cleerely illuminated in the one, & so solidly grounded in the other, that hauing admired her himselfe, and returning home to his brethren was wont to vtter wonderfull prayses of her vnto them.

And her fame at length by the mouths of many became so diuulged, as from
places

places far & neere, infinite numbers of all sortes of people flocked vnto her, some to know, and see so noble, louely, and holy a Virgin, who had lost her head to saue her virginity, and after death for her Spouses greater honour had ben by a holy Man miraculouly raysed to life, accounting the place and company she liued in, most blessed by her presence: Others, by their great importunity and earnest prayers obteyned to see the white pure circle stil re-

mayning in her necke, denoting the wound which in her martyrdome she receaued; the sight whereof caused them to shed many teares of loue, and ioy that Christ had triumphed so gloriously in her first, and sent her afterwards so happily vnto them.

S. VVenefrid herselfe would gladly out of her great and profound humility haue denied them that fauour; but a charitable desire of their good, gayned many wayes thereby, and the other Vir-
gins

gins intreaties , made her willing to affoord that contentment vnto them, as fearing not be made proude with their excessiue prayses, or apt to assume vnto herselfe any merit , of being so praysed; the high knowledge indeed which she had of Gods attributes and perfections , compared with her owne fraylties and nothing, being two sure grounds of solid humility in her.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

How S. Wenefride prophetically foretold in order, the death of Theonia first; next her owne; and lastly the holy end of Elerius: How also after the death of Theonia, she was made Abbesse by Elerius, and gouerned that Monastery in all sanctimony, till her dying day.

Blessed Elerius visiting
on a tyme S. VVenefrid
in her Monastery, to conferre, as his custome was, of
holy

holy things, tould her, speaking occasional y of the happines to dye well, that he had often reioyced to thinke, that he should haue her neere him at his death, and afterwards to pray for him. No Father (said she prophetically vnto him) it will not fall out so, Christ hauing ordayned the contrary.

For first, you shall liue to bury holy *Theonia* our deare Mother, and me also some few yeares after; which done, you shall in short

tyme

time end holily your dayes,
& passe full of merits heere
gayned, to ioyes euerlasting.

All which proued true,
for very soone after *Theonia*
fell into a daungerous sick-
nes, and finding her selfe
neere her end, to comfort
the Religious praying about
her, and bitterly lamenting
her departure from them :
Children (said she) teares
should not be shed for fri-
ends, or for our selues, vnles
some euil had hapned to the
or vs; but in my case & yours
the contrary now appeareth

for

for I shall by death, hasten
I hope, to my Heauenly
spouse calling me vnto him;
and you in my place shall
haue blessed *Wenefride*, a
much more holy Mother,
by her good exāple & hea-
uenly instructions to guide
you. Looke vpon her ther-
fore as on a bright starre, &
shining patterne of all ver-
tue; tread the steps, and goe
not out of those holy wayes
wherein she will lead you,
to Religious perfection.

After which words, she
receaued the holy sacramēt

at

at Blessed *Elerius* his hands
for her *viaticum* towards
heauen, & breathed out her
pure, and holy soule, glo-
riously by Angels accom-
panied thither. After whose
exequies solemnly and de-
uoutly performed, holy *Ele-
rius* ordayned *S. VVenefride*
Abbesse in her place, to go-
uerne the Monastery, which
she, in her humility, for a
tyme resisted, till Obediēce
to the Saint, and Charity to
the sisters instantly besee-
ching her to vndertake the
charge, preuayled with her.

No

No sooner was this Office thus imposed on her, but she, like a Candle set on a candlesticke higher then before, began to cast out more brightly her cleere rayes of Vertues, and to giue a new light & life, as it were to the whole Monastery, by her heauenly speaches & examples; so as her humility by the dignity of her Office, with her Patience, Charity, and other Vertues, though admirable before, seemed now to haue ben very much increased in her.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the high esteeme that S. Elerius himselfe, with other Religious, and secular Persons made of S. Wenefride: And of the miracles which she wrought in her Monastery, by curing all sorts of distressed, or sicke people repaying vnto her.

S. *Wenefride* had not liued long Abbesse of the Monastery, before the fame of her sanctity & wisdom came to be, throughout that whole

whole prouince, so vniuersally diuulged, as Principall persons both of the Clergy & Laity repayred frequently vnto her, neuer departing without singular edification, by her behauour and speeches Yea euen theeues, & robbers themselves, with other notorious Malefactours, by her gracious aspect and effectiuall exhortations made charitably vnto them, were from their euill wayes, oftentimes reclaymed. And now, not only in priuate houses, but in

K

Chur-

Churches and pulpits also, were her vertues frequently recounted, and especially by *S. Elerius*, best acquainted with them, who vsed to tell his owne disciples, and others also, that she was diuinely sent by God, to honour, and benefit the place & Couñtry where she liued: and his words proued true, for no day passed almost, wherein her diuine Spouse, to shew her dearenes vnto him, did not comfort, and cure in sudaine, and miraculous manner, grieued,
sickly,

sickly, and distressed persons, by the help of her prayers; so as her Monastery was now become a common refuge vnto them. But amongst other graces eminent in her, she was noted to haue had a singular talent in discovering temptations, and teaching withall due remedies therof, whereby not only her subiects, but others also, euen Prelates themselves, & Religious persons, were profitably assisted.

In the vse of things for herselfe, she was so truly

poore, as not the least superfluity was admitted by her; yea want of needfull things, when at any tyme they hapned, were most welcom vnto her.

She suggested also no lesson, more often to her sisters, then that they should haue alwaies their Redeemers example before their eyes, to imitate those Vertues, which he exercised for thé, and to be carefull to haue a pure intention in what they did, only to please him.

Fortitude and Patience

she

she euer prayſed, and commended vnto them, as needfull, and certaine remedies, victoriously to ouercom all temptations, wherein their merit more, then in not feeling of them, conſiſted; for that by this, and not by the other they ſhould come to be crowned.

Prayer, ſhe was wont to tell them, well made, did dilate their ſoules to receaue plentifull graces; and holy actions did fill them, when they were humbly and frequently performed.

CHAP. XX.

How S. Wenefride was forewarned of her death, & prepared herselfe for the same; And how by acquainting S. Elerius and her sisters therewith, she filled their hearts full of heaviness, and affliction.

S. *Wenefride* as a full Pomgranut of heavenly merits, & ripened to fall on the ground, that she might rise in a new spring, more gloriously afterwards, was
in

in the feruour of her courſe,
& ſpeedy running towards
the goale of religious Perfe-
ction, warned by her deare
Lord, that he meant ſhortly
to call her vnto him.

Which moſt welcome
newes, as of a happineſſe
long before, and inſtantly
deſired, rayſed the thoughts
and affections of her ſoule
to a more feruent vnion
with her Creatour, in extati-
call prayer for whole dayes
and nights togeather, in
humble acts, and painefull
exerciſes of her Charity to-

wards others; in fasting likewise and other great austerities, even as those, who to make a long journey in a short tyme, do redouble & widen their paces.

And that she might not leaue her beloued friends vnwarned of her departure on the suddaine from them, she imparted first to *S. Ele-rius* himselfe, the Call she had receaued from her Sauiour, and afterwards to her sisters; whose sorrow thereat was little inferiour to the excessiue ioy, which herselfe,

selfe , by the comfortable thoughts of going to her Lord, continually receaued, and aswell by flowing teares as dolefull speaches they expressed the same vnto her. But she, as with a face then wholly turned frō the world towards heauen , intreated them to conforme their will to their Creatours pleasure therein , and not to doubt , but that she should by her prayers in heauen, be more profitable, then by her presence heere on earth she could be , vnto them .

For that (said she) is not a Country of ignorance, but of knowledge, cleerely reuealed, whereby the Blessed vnderstand their friends necessities heere on earth, and being vnited to the fountayne of Charity it selfe, they will be no lesse powerfull, then ready to procure speedy helps and remedies for them; which I do promise to do for you, my beloved deare Children, after Christ shall take me vnto him.

And whereas (said she)

to

to other worldly soules vn-
willing to dye, and fearefull
to behold the face of their
high Iudge, whome they are
guilty in their liues, grie-
uously to haue offended,
Death commeth as a cruell
iaylor to breake down their
mortery houses, and to drag
them forcibly vnto him:
So, to holy Soules, he euer
cōmeth as a welcom guest,
and therefore findeth the
dore of their hart open to
receaue him; like vnto men
expecting the returne of
their Lord from his hea-
uenly

uently wedding, and ready to
goe with him, as I am now
for that heauenly iourney,
with my gracious Lord,
throughly (I hope) pre-
pared.



CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

How S. Wenefride sickned, & receaued the last Sacrament; and what exceeding comfort she tooke in her death: VVith a pious Exhortation to her Religious sisters.

ALbeit the approach of death was not terrible, but most delightfull to S. VVenefride, yet was her sicknes the forerunner, and naturall cause thereof, by frequent conuulsions very painefull vnto her, which
she

she with a glad patience, to goe to her heauenly Spouse, silently sustayned, often and earnestly beseeching him, not to let the infernall Enemy be frightfull vnto her in her last agony.

And finding by her much weaknes, & forces decayed, that her dissolution approached, she called for the Saint her Confessor, to receaue the diuine Sacrament of him, as a safe protection in so dreadfull a passage. And behoulding her sisters kneeling round about her,

and

and grieuing aboue measure
to loose her presence, no
lesse comfortable then pro-
fitable vnto them; Deare
Children (said she) griue
not so, I beseech you, at my
happines thus approaching,
but reioyce rather with me,
that I shall fully now enioy
him in heauen, whome in
earth heere, I haue loued.
Treade also, so neerely as
you can, my footesteps, by
seruing him as I haue done,
& contemning for his sake,
such baites, and base plea-
sures as the world can af-
foard

toard you. Let your promised fayth to him be inuiolably obserued, who by his mercyes and merits is only able to bring you comfortably to this passage, and eternally to crowne you. Cōceaeue your bodies, though youthfull and faire, to be (as truly they are) but loathsome prisons of your soule, and mortery houses, apt, if you take not heed, to pollute, & defile you: and persuade your selues assuredly, that so miserable a world as this is, and full of temptations,

tions, can yield no true happiness or pleasures without daungers vnto you.

To others also that came to visit her, she ceased not at times as her voyce would serue, to giue profitable aduises, & aboue all, that they should be ready, for that passage which herselfe then was entring into; and to spend their liues in such sort, as they might receaue comfort when that moment should approach, on which Eternall weale, or woe dependeth.

CHAP. XXII.

*Of S. Wenefrides happy death
and desire to be buried neere
Theonia, her Mother and
Predecessour; which was by
S. Elerius accordingly per-
formed: of the miracles like-
wise wrought at S. Wene-
frides Sepulcher; and of S.
Elerius holy death.*

AS S. *V*Venefride in the
beginning of Noué-
ber became by her sicknes
very much exhausted, so did
the ferour of her deuotion,
in

in praying, and speaking of holy things, seeme continually increased, by repeating often amongst other profitable Lessons giuen to her sisters this one, to wit, that the cōfort which pure soules finde in their death, did abundantly, recompence all worldly pleasures and contentments whatsoever for the seruice of Christ by them forsaken.

And calling her Father S. Elerius vnto her, after she had taken her last leaue of him, in a most respectfull

sweet manner, comforting herselfe and him also, by a certaine hope, they they should meete againe ere longe, and liue in heauen eternally togeather; she afterwards humbly besought him, that her body might be buried neere vnto *Theonia* her holy Mother, which the Saint gladly promised. And soone after, in an act of feruent prayer, vpon the 3. day of Nouember she breathed out her pure soule into her Redeemers hands, ready to receaue it.

Which

Which being perceaued by S. Elerius, and the sisters praying about her, they fall into such new complaints, and sad expressions of their sorrow, that the Saint was enforced, to smother his owne griefe, and to comfort them all he could, by declaring, that she was only gone to Heauen before them, where gloriously, vnited with God, she would be no lesse powerful & ready then when she liued in earth, by her prayers to help them.

Her body nothing chan-

ged in the louelines thereof by death, was neere vnto *Theonia* solemnly afterwards interred, euen in the ashes, as it were, of many other great Saints, buried in that place before, amōgst whom *Cheb* and *Sennan*, the one lying at her head, and the other by her side, were for sanctity & miracles in their dayes famously renowned, and had Churches therfore (euen yet remayning in that Prouince) to their memories erected; wherein by wondrous signes their glory with

God

God is now frequently testified.

And albeit these two, & other innumerable Saintes haue ben interred in that holy ground; yet was the same, for S. *Wenefrides* Sepulcher afterwards especially honoured, & graced with numberles, and notorious miracles, by her prayers there obteyned.

S. *Elerius* also, soone after holily disceased, & was buried in a Church erected to his Name and memory, in which at this very day Al-

mighty God, through his merits and prayers worketh miraculous cures vpon persons either diseased, or distressed.

The End of the first Booke.

A N



A N
A P P E N D I X

*Of the Translatour, concerning
divers particulars of S. W e-
nefrids History, omitted by
the Author.*

MY Author (Courteous
Reader) more carefull
to write plainly and
truly his History, then
to obserue the conditions of an
exact Historian, speaketh not of
the tyme wherein *S. Wenefride* li-
ued, as he should haue done; nor
when her body was to *Shrewsbury*

translated; nor whether *S. Elerius*, or other Saints reliques mentioned in her life, were with it transferred. Wherefore, I will heere adde what I haue read, for your further satisfaction.

First therefore, I find in a learned collection which a friend of myne hath made of British and English Antiquities, either wholly omitted, or obscurely expressed by other writers; that *S. Wenefride* liued about the yeare of Christ 660. And wheras *S. Bede* flourishing also at that tyme hath made no mention of her at all in his History, amongst the other Saints of our Countrey; it might well happen, because the continuall iarrs, and bloudy quarrels between the *Britans* and *Saxons*,

did

did so hinder all commerce betweene these two Nations, as that it seemes the Acts of one Church became almost wholly vnknowne vnto the other, especially in *Yorke-shyre*, where *S. Bede* most commonly liued, far distant from any part of *Wales*: so as his silence of her, and of *S. Elerius* (in the Roman martyrologe acknowledged) as of many other British Saintes gloriously flourishing in those dayes, and before insinuated also by my Author, disproueth nothing that is by him, or any other learned Antiquary affirmed.

Her body was in the yeare of our Lord 1138. translated to *Shrewsbury*, togeather with the reliques of many other Saintes neere

vnto

vnto hers formerly interred. And for prooffe hereof, besides the testimonies of Authors, about 36. yeares since, a Protestant Gentleman willing to pleasure a learned friend of mine, whome he knew to be Catholique, presented him with an arme, as he said, of *S. Wenefride*, saued by some body when her Shrine was defaced. The which he finding not decently kept, but put into a very old leather bag full of Cobwebs (as himselfe hath tould me) taking it out, more decently to adorne it, found in a paper fixed thereon, somewhat written in an old hād, so as with much difficulty he read at last these words, *Sancti Elerij*; whereby he vnderstood, that it was not the arme of *S. Wenefride*,

but

but of *S. Elerius*, translated doubtlesse with her, or soone after, to *Shrewsbury*.

Having likewise conferred with diuers learned men of *Wales*, neither superstitious, nor ouercredulous to belieue Fables, or vncertainties, they haue tould me of so many places in sundry parts of *Wales*, northwards especially, famous heeretofore, as pilgrimages to Saintes bodies there interred, that I conceaue the old *Brittish* Monkes and Hermits, in number and religious sanctity of life, not to haue ben inferiour to those primitiue Monkes of *Egypt, Palestine, Syria*, and other places, by *S. Athanasius, S. Hierome*, & other ancient Fathers famously renowned; albeit as liuing in more remote &

ruder

ruder parts of the world then the others did, the histories of their holy liues haue not been by learned mens pens equally diuulged.

In so much, as *M. Camden*, no fauourable reporter of such Catholique Acts and Monuments, rarely now extant, speaking of the old british Monkes of *Glastenbury* Monastery from the first Apostolicall tymes of that Church, hath these wordes, in his *Britannia: Primis his temporibus viri sanctissimi &c.* In these first tymes (to wit of the British Church before the *Saxons* inuasion of England, more then 1100. yeares since) many most holy men night and day attending to the seruice of God, liued in this place, maintayned by the Kings liberality

and

and trayning vp youth in piety & liberal sciences, imbraced a solitary life, that so with greater quiet & repose they might attend to the studies of Diuinity, and exercise themselves in all seuerity, to beare the Christ of Christ &c. Of which sort of Monkes so by him described, were very many Religious men, dispersed in like manner though all parts of that Church, liuing either in holy Communities as Monkes, or els alone as Hermites in solitary places; of which number were *S. Beuno*, *S. Saturnus*, *S. Deifer*, *S. Elerius*, *S. Cheb*, and *S. Sennan* mentioned in this life of *S. VVenefrid*.

And, as Godly men, so Holy Virgins also, did liue in houses religiously togeather, like vnto

those

chole mentioned by *S. Hierome*, who liued at *Bethleem*, vnder *S. Paula*, and *Eustochium* her Daughter : & such was the house wherein *S. Wenefride* liued, first at *Finhon* the place of her martyrdome, and afterwards at *Guitherin* (called in Latin *Witheriacum* by my Author) where she dyed happily, and was honoured 600. yeares together for a Saint, vntill her sollemne translation, as is aforesaid, to *Shrewsbury* ; where also she hath byn by God glorified with many miracles euen vntill our dayes, as she had byn before both at *Finhon*, and *Guitherin*, the places aboue mentioned .

THE



THE SECOND BOOKE,
 conteyning the miracles wrought
 at *S. Wenefrides Well*; as also
 vpon her Translation
 to *Shrewsbury*.

CHAP. I.

*Of the great concourse of people
 to her Well, graced by mi-
 racles, no lesse then before,
 after her departure from
 that place.*

A Lmighty God ceased
 not by wonderfull

M

mira-

miracles to grace the holy place of *S. VVenefrids* martyrdom, after he had inspired her (as hath ben said) before her death wholly to abandone it, to the end deuout people, perchance, in other parts of the Country might come to know the eminent sanctity of her life, and herselfe perfect the graces of her soule, by liuing humbly, and obediently amongst strangers, as she did for many yeares, vntill by her singular merits & exemplar life, she was ordeyned
against

against her will, to be a holy
Mistresse and gratefull Go-
uerneffe of many Virgins.

We may also conceaue,
that this humble Virgin,
(who was wont to blush,
yea and shed teares, when
she heard herselfe prayſed)
desired, & obteyned of her
heauenly Spouse, to goe out
of the way, as it were, and
absent herselfe from that
place, where she could not
chooſe but be ſeene, and ho-
noured by multitudes of
people, daily viſitting her
Well, as the miraculous

Trophy of her martyrdome there susteyned; wondring first, to see such a source of pure water breaking out of the ground vpon which her head first fell; next, to behold the stones therein, as with drops of her bloud strangely stayned, or died rather; and lastly to smell the greene mosse growing about the *Well*, with a musky sweet odour more then naturally perfumed.

It was (I say) a pleasure no doubt, and much by the holy Virgin desired, to liue

out

out of the noise of her owne prayſes there daily reſounded; eſpecially when to the wonders of the place it ſelfe, other miraculous Cures began to be wrought vpon leprouſ, blind, and all kind of diſeaſed perſons, either by drinking of the water, or bathing themſelues in it: of which ſome few, in the Chapters following ſhalbe by me declared.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of a blind maid restored to her sight, by washing her head in S. Wenefrids Well, and praying in her Chappell.

A POORE Carpenter dwelling not far from S. Wenefrides Well, had a Daughter borne blind, who hauing hard of the wonderfull cures wrought there, by the intercession and merits of that holy Virgin, ceased not to importune her Father daily, that she might
be

be ledd to that miraculous
Well; and hauing finally
obteyned the same, she first
bathed her head in the wa-
ter thereof, and then be-
ing conducted to the Chap-
pell neere vnto it, she spent
the whole night deuoutely
in prayer, that God would
be pleased through the me-
rits and intercession of the
Saint, there martyred for
his sake, to bestow vpon her
corporall sight, the better
to serue him afterwards: &
falling into a slumber, to-
wards the morning in a cor-

ner of the Chappell, she was no sooner awaked, but she found her selfe to see perfectly; which being perceaued by her Father, he ceased not, togeather with his Daughter, ioyfully to proclayme that miraculous fauour by *S. VVenefrids* powerfull prayers, euidently obteyned.

The fame of this miracle generally diuulged, bred a fresh deuotion in others, to repayre in like manner to that place, for obteyning help, and comfort in their

cor-

corporall and spirituall distresses ; and they were not frustrated of their hopes, faythfully, and deuoutely so conceaued : whereby the former great Fame of the place, became more vniuersally and gloriously diuulged, to the honour of him, by whose omnipotency and gracious goodnes these miraculous cures were multiplied , delightfully glorified in the honours done to his Saintes , and in their glories eternally exalted.

CHAP. III.

*How a Theefe was punished
for pursuing one that fled
into S. Wenefrids Church:
And how the same man, hum-
bled for his fault, was mira-
culously saved from death.*

IT happened that a mes-
senger sent by a Chiefe
Lord of that Country, to
warne his Neighbours of
some danger approaching
frō the Saxons their Borde-
rers, and alwayes common-
ly in enmity with them,

was

was way-layd by Thecues ,
and pursued towards S. *W*ene-
frids Church , whither as
to a safe Sanctuary he fled ,
and hastily tying his horse
at the Church dore , ranne
himselfe vp to the Aultar,
where the Thecues , not
daring to pursue him fur-
ther , left him , but tooke
away his horse .

The messenger after their
departure , returning to-
wards the dore , and fin-
ding his horse gone , entred
againe very dolefully into
the Church , and prostrate
before

before the Aultar, vttered
his cōplaintes to the Saint
of the iniury, and losse ther-
by sustained, beseeching her
to punish, as they deserued
the wrongfull Authors of
that and other mischiefes,
to the great harme of ho-
nest people sinfully com-
mitted, and by some exem-
plar reuenge taken vpon
them, to warne, and deterre
others, from violating in
like manner, the safety of
her Chappel, and reuerence
due vnto it; and so departed
onwards in his iourney, not
fru-

frustrate afterward of what he had prayed for.

For Almighty God , in honour of S. *VV*enefrid and her Chappell, forthwith afflicted the Theefe that had vnloosed, and taken away the horse , with such a raging extremity of payne, throughout his whole body, that he often desired to be freed by death from so intollerable a torment, daily increasing on him, till the humours which caused the same, fel into his right arme, making it first to swell, and

after-

afterwards to rot in a most horrible, and loathesome manner, vntill at length humbled by affliction, and hopeles of all ease otherwise he came in a very penitent manner, to the Saints chappell, confessing his fault, & demaunding her pardon, with many teares, for so great a wrong and insolency committed there by him.

Vpon this his humiliation he became eased by degrees, and by little and little cured of his painful vlcer, praying God, and the holy

Martyr

Martyr for their mercyes
towards him, & remayning
euer afterwards whilst he
liued, a dreadfull exam-
ple, to warne others, from
violating, as he had done,
the sanctity of that place,
or wronging S. *Wenefrids*
clients running for succour
in their distresses vnto her.

The Fame also of this
miracle diuulged abroad,
increased much the peoples
opinion of the place, and
their deuotion towards the
Saint, who had shewed her-
selfe so powerfull a Patro-
nesse

nesse of her Chappell, and
Defendresse of such, as
for their safety, and protec-
tion from iniuries, repay-
red vnto it.



CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

How certaine Theeves who had stolne a Cow neere to S. Wenefrids Chappell, and driven her through Rocky wayes ; were notwithstanding traced by her footesteps in the hard stones miraculously imprinted, and so enforced to leaue her to the Owners pursuing them.

A Nother Miracle, no lesse wonderfull then the former hapned in this manner. Certaine Theeves

N

hauing

having stolne a Cow, out of a pasture neere to S. *Venefrids* Chappell, & driuen her through Rocky high wayes, that they might not by her footing be traced, it fell out far otherwise: for the Cow trod not one steppe, but as if she had gone in durty deepe wayes, wherby her footing, and the theues also themselues, so plainly appeared, that the owner & his Neighbours, the next morning missing the beast, did very easily see which way she was driuen.

Where.

Whereupon they following the tracke with all speed, came so neere to o-vertake the Theeves, that they were constreyned in great feare to fly away, and leaue the Cow behind them to their pursuers. VVho at better leasure afterwarde considering how the Cowes feet had miraculously made prints in the hard stones as she was driuen away, but not as she returned, perceaued it to be an euident miracle, and for such, to the honour of S. *Wenefride*, by

N 2

whose

whose prayers it hapned, they diuulged the same, through out the whole Countrey; & the infinite numbers of people flocking thither to see the said printes in the stones so straügly made by the Cowes feet, increased the fame thereof.

Now the theeues themselves, fearing for their theft committed so neere vnto the Saintes Chappell, to be punished by her, as the other had bene before, for stealing the horse mentioned in the former

Chapter

Chapter, came of theſelues before the Virgin Martyrs Aultar, and confeſſed penitently their fault in the preſence of many people, with promiſe to commit the like no more, in honour of the Bleſſed Saint, who had in ſo ſtrange a manner, diſcouered in hard ſtones, and flints, the tracke of their owne, and of the Cowes footings. Which fact of theirs being thus diſcouered, & voluntarily confeſſed, proued a generall warning to many other bad men of that ta-

king-trade, to abstayne likewise from theft, especially out of any place, neere to the Saintes Chappels.



CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of daily Cures done vpon sicke children throwne into the streame of S. VVenefrids VWell; and of others also cured miraculously of agues, & hoat feauers, by drinking of the same water.

IN procelse of tyme, this sacred Fountayne, the Trophy, and triumphant signe of S. VVenefrids Martyrdome, became so famously renowned, for miraculous cures done by the wa-

ters thereof, that Mothers were vsually wont to throw their young children sicke of any disease, into the streame running from the same, who became presently cured, by the touch of those waters.

Such also as had Agues, or hoat burning Feauers in any part of the Country, were wont for a certaine and present remedie therof, either to drinke a draught of that pure fountaine-water, or if they had it not at hand, to put in some one of
the

the blouddy stones, taken out of the VVell, into a draught of any other water, and became thereby presently cured. In like māner such as had any swelling or soare about them, were accustomed to bath the part affected, with the said water, and found present remedy thereby.

The first vse of which remedies, for all sorts of sores and diseases, is said to haue ben taught by the holy Virgin-Martyr herselfe, who visibly after her death

appearing to many who in dangerous sicknesse deuoutely called vpon her, willed them to apply the water & stoncs of her well in māner afore said, for their perfect, and speedy recouery : Almighty God cōtinuing still, to grace this glorious Monument of his deare spouses death, by affoording helpe thereby to such, as either deuoutely repaire vnto it, or faithfully seeke remedies frō it; according to *S. Beuno* his holy prediction, whē before his departure frō those

parts

parts he late vpon a stone
with S. *Wenefride* her selfe,
neere to the Wels side, and
foretould the miraculous
cures which should throgh
her merits and prayers be at
the same, afterwards per-
formed.



CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

How diuers thefts from places neere vnto the Well, were by S. Wenefride miraculously punished; and how the Authors became warned and penitent for the same.

TH E streames of water breaketh out of *Saint VVenefrides VVell*, in such abundance together, as within one furlongs space it driueth a mill, neuer standing still for want of water euen in the greatest drought
of

of summer, nor is euer hindered from grinding, by any freezing of the streame, by which it is driuen in winter.

This Mill, by certaine theeves, was vpon a tyme robbed in the night, and the Irons thereof were carried away to be put into another mill built not far frō thence by those that stole them: but through the merits of *S. VVenefride* a strange euent hapned heer about for the Mill into which these Irons were put, could neuer be
made

made to turne, or grind any thing therewith : so as the stealers thereof mooued at length by the miracle more the once experiēced, brought them back againe, and confessed their fault penitently in the Saintes Chappell; warning others thereby not to commit the like theft in places neere vnto it for feare of beeing, by her prayers, punished for it.

By this Miracle so diuulged, many people also were moued the more to glorify God, in those wonderous things

things which he did , to testifie , the great merits of this holy Virgin S. *Wenefride* , ioyfully relating to one another , how S. *Beuno's* prediction of the innumerable Cures which should be done by those miraculous waters , and by the Virgins owne prayers , began to be now fulfilled , when as humbly prostrate on her knees before her departure frō that place , she besought her heauenly spouse , corporally to blesse , and spiritually to sanctifie those who in

ho-

honour of him, and his graces in herselfe, should in future tymes visit that Fountayne .

And as wonderfull , yea almost daily, miracles graced this place thus blessed by her; so was her Sepulcher after her death , for the like Cures wrought thereat , equally illustrious & renowned by the multitudes of blind, deafe, lazar, & diseased people , who by kissing and touching the earth about it , were miraculously cured .

CHAP. VII.

Of the first occasion of Translating S. Wenefrids reliques to the Monastery of Benedicta Monkes in Shrewsbury, happened upon a vision to a holy Monke in Chester, of the same Order.

THe miraculous cures daily wrought at S. Wenefrids Well, and at the place of her Sepulcher also, continued vntill the raigne King William the Conqueror, at what time a chiefe Earle

of his Court, called Roger, through his great piety and zeale to mantayne Gods seruants, built in *Shrewsbury* a sumptuous faire Monastery, and endowed the same with sufficient reuenues, to his owne great prayse, and the benefit of that Citty: which Monastery being ended, & Religious men with their Superiour placed therein, they began, piously to complayne that they wanted reliques in their Church, whereas that Country of *Wales* in innumerable pla-

ces

ces was stored abundantly with them, by reason of so many great Saintes, men & women, who formerly had flourished in great sanctity of life, and miraculous testifications therof, throughout that whole Kingdome.

Whereupon to haue their Church hallowed, & their new Monastery guarded with such sacred pledges, munificently placed, & duly honoured by thē, they began to inquire after some speciall Saint, whose Reliques might happily be gotten for

that purpose by them; during which deliberation of theirs, a Monke of this their Monastery, fell very sicke, in body, and so distracted in mind withall, that not only his Brethren there, but in *Chester* and other places also, hearing of his pittifull case, ceased not to pray most hartily for him.

And as in *Chester-Abbey*, the Subprior of that Monastery, a godly man, called *Radulphus*, had one day ended his prayer for that end,

he

he fell into an vnusuall kind of sleepe, to whome a woman, the meane while, in a very glorious habit appeared, and said: If you desire the sicke Monks health, let some one of you goe, & say a Masse in the Chappell, neere S. *Wenefrids Well* for him, and he shall presently recouer; & so she vanished.

The Moncke heerewith awaked, durst not for some tyme impart this vision vnto any, as fearing little credit would be giuen vnto it, vntill at length, the

O,

sicknes

sicknes and great distemper of his deare Brother lamentably still increasing, charitably moued him to speake thereof vnto his brethren, who presently belieued the same, and that it was S. *VVenefride* herselfe who had appeared vnto him. Wherefore sending forthwith two of their Company to the forsaide Chappell, to say Masse accordingly, the sicke Mōke at that very instant, being then in *Shrewsbury*, recovered his health.

Who soone after this his
mira-

miraculous recovery, came
himselfe in person, vnto the
said Chappell and Well, as
he greatly desired, to giue
God thanks for the same;
and after hauing bathed
himselfe in the water, and
also druncke therof, he ioy-
fully returned home to
Shrewsbury perfectly cured:
neuer ceasing afterwards to
be thankfull to God, and
the Blessed Martyr, for that
gracions fauour, by her
prayers chiefly obteyned.

And not only he, but the
rest of his Brethren like-

wife began to be singularly
deuoted vnto her , and la-
boured by all meanes possi-
ble to get some particle of
her Virginall sacred Body
vnto them.



CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

*Of the earnest desire which the
Abbot & Monkes of Shrews-
bury had to get the body of
S. VVenefride vnto them:
And how finally after many
yeares, & very great diffi-
culties, they obteyned the
same.*

THe Abbot & Monks
of Shrewsbury, for ma-
ny yeares persisting in their
holy desires, of getting S.
VVenefrides body, obteyned
at length in the peacefull

O 5 reigne

reigne of King *Henry* the first a Grant therof, but by reason of wars, and many tumults happening in that Countrey after this Kings death, it was not effected vntill the secōd yeare of King *Stephens* reigne, when as the holy Abbot *Herbert* in a consultation of his Monkes, ordeyned *Robert* his Prior, together with one *Richard*, a chiefe Monke of the same Monastery, to go into *Wales* about it.

Before whose going, the said *Robert*, more sollicitous
then

then others in the businesse,
directed diuers letters vnto
friends in *Wales*, best likely
therein to assist him, who
promised gladly their help,
& wished him to hasten his
cōming amōgst thē. Where-
fore beginning his iourney
he first visited the Bishop
of *Bangor*, in his way, and
was by him directed to a
Principall Lord who ruled
in that Country, & by him
him very courteously re-
ceaued.

As soone as the Noble
Man, had vnderstood the
cause

cause of his cōming: Reue-
red Father (said he) I doubt
not, but that God, and the
Blessed Martyr hath sent
you to translate her holy
body, to your Monastery,
where it will be much more
honoured then heere in this
Countrey it is. VVherfore I
will not only yield you my
consent therennto, but will
send also my seruants there-
in to assist you. And sinfull
man, as I am, did not my
present, and very important
businesse, hinder me, I
would presume to goe with
you

you in person, and with my vnworthy handes, deliuer those sacred Reliques, and Pledge of Sanctity, vnto you.

VVith which gracious answere they departed towards the Saints Sepulcher, being seauen in number, to wit, the two Priours of *Shrewsbury & Chester*, *Richard* the Monke, with a godly Priest borne in that Country, and three attendants; who going onwards in their iourney, not far from *Gui-therine* they met with a man
that

that could them, how the Inhabitants therabout, having heard of their coming, were exceedingly troubled thereat, and absolutely resolved to hinder them in their pretence, and not to suffer the chiefe Saint, & Patronesse of their Countrey, by strangers to be carried away from them. And (said he) from this their resolution generally taken, no fauour or power of any man liuing, will be able to draw them.

These words being plai

nely

nely and sincerely uttered, very much troubled Prior Robert and his companions all that night; but yet praying all together, and humbly craving Gods direction & assistance in their intended busines, they neuertheless adventured, to prosecute their iourney, & comming the next day neere to the place, Prior Robert thought good to remaine himselfe in a Farmers house, priuately lodged that night, and to send the Prior of Cbester and the other Priest to Gui-

therine

therine before him , as men well borne, and knowne in that Country .

After they were gone , Prior *Robert* , rising as his custome was by night to say his mattins, was certified by one of his company, a good deuout man, that a glorious Virgin had appeared that night to him , bidding him goe to his Prior, & tell him from her, that he should be of good comfort, because he should ioyfully and prosperously , effect the busines which he came for, by the
help

help of her, whose honour
he hath so particularly
sought; and hauing accep-
ted of his holy intention,
will ioyne also with him, in
the performance therof.



CHAP.

P

CHAP. IX.

*How Prior Robert himselfe
had a vision, whereby he vn-
derstood, that he should ob-
teyne the body of S. Wene-
fride, and carry it vnto
Shrewsbury with him.*

THe Prior much com-
forted with the rela-
tion of the vision which his
seruant, as before had made
vnto him, began to slumber
after his Mattins ended, &
in his sleepe seemed to see a
holy Abbot of his owne

Mona-

Monastery, called Godfrey, who some yeares before in a good old age, and great sanctity of life was happily diseased, vttering these words comfortably vnto him. Brother *Robert*, feare not of fayling in your intent, but be of good cheere, for we shall ouercome such as shall oppose vs therein, by Gods helpe, and obteyne what hath ben by vs, for many yeares togeather so earnestly desired.

Which said, he vanished presently away, leauing the

Prior full of good hope, to obteyne that, which his speach imported; so as in the morning, he comfortably declared to those who were with him the vision he had also receaved, and willed them therefore to prepare presently for their iourney. But before they were ready, a messenger came from the other *Prior* purposely sent, to hasten them forwards & to certifie them withall, that Almighty God, and the Saint herselfe had disposed all things, so prosperously,
for

for them, that they should not returne without obeyning what they desired.

This ioyfull message receaued, they went on, and making what speede they could, they came early in the morning to the Church where *S. Wenefrides* body was certainly interred, and hauing for a while at her shrine deuoutely prayed, the chiefe Priest of the Parish came in, and courteously saluted them, as they did him likewise in a very humble manner, earnestly in-

treating him withall, to be their charitable helper, in carrying away the Saintes body with them, to a place where it should be more magnificently interred then there it was, and daily honoured, by multitudes of people, desirous to haue so sacred a Treasure reposed amongst them.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

How the Parish Priest courteously condescended to their desire, as having byn before hand diuinely prepared, to deliuer the body of S. Wenefride vnto them.

THe good Priest patiently hard their request, and courteously tould them, that he for his part, would easily graunt what they desired of him, as having had for sometyme before, the will of God, and of

the sacred Virgin herselfe, intimated vnto him, as now (said he) I shall briefly tell you.

On Easter Eue last, I watching all night in this place, had a vision which exceedingly affrighted me, for a beautifull young man appeared vnto me, scarsely then a sleepe, and fully wakening me, bad me rise. To whome I answered, that it was not as yet tyme to begin mattins, and so he left me. But returning the second time when I was much

more

more then before soundly asleepe, he bad me rise as he had done before. Whereupon beeing very heauy, I tould him, that I would rise in due tyme, and couering my head with my cloake, returned to sleepe agayne.

But he, returning the third tyme vnto me, pulled away my cloake with great force, willing me to follow him quickly, as I did, being very much affrighted: and comming to the Virgins Shrine, he pointed with his finger towards it, and said:

Note this place well, & my words also, whereby I do command thee, that if some moneths hence any persons come to open this Sepulcher, & to carry away the Saintes body with them, hinder them not in their holy designe, but assist them in all thou maist, least by dooing contrary to what I heere diuinely foretell thee, some painefull & vnremediablen sicknes, to punish thy disobedience, do happen vnto thee. And hauing vttered these words, this Angel,

as

as I thinke he was, vanished away. So as I wil not faile for my part, to help you in your purpose, by perswading others also, who are owners of this village, to yield willingly the Saints body: and for this purpose I haue ordeined them to come themselves hither vnto you.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

The Priours speech vnto the people assembled in the Church, about obteyning their leaue to carry away S. Wenefrids Body; and how their consent was finally obteyned.

THe Priour seeing the people in great numbers assembled, by an Interpreter tould them, that he and his Companions were come, diuinely warranted, to procure of them S. *Wenefrids* body, that in their

Citty

Citty, and Monastery much deuoted vnto her, it might more thē it could be there, honoured and respected; & the Blessed Virgin Martyr herselfe (said he) as your Pastour heere partly knoweth) hath by many visions manifested her willingnes hereunto, and will not be pleased with such as shall dare heerein to resist her. To which speach of his, they gently harkened, and became inclined thereby to graunt what he requested: one only amongst them opposed

posed himfelfe, and clamorously could them in preſence of the reſt, that they ſhould neuer be deprived, by his will, of ſo ſacred a Treafure, as was the body of that Saint, who had liued holily, and dyed happily in that place, leauing her reliques to be honoured by them, no leſſe then they had ben by their Anceſtors before them, Almighty God hauing from tyme to tyme, by miracles, approved the pious deuotion of people towards them.

This

This passionate boldnes
of the man much troubled
the Prior, so as to stop his
mouth, and gayne his con-
sent, he caused one of his
cōpany to giue him money
very largely, by which he
was so altered, as that others
not knowing the reason of
his change (carefully from
them concealed) wondered
thereat; and imputing the
same to some miraculous
operation wrought by God
and the Saint, began to
yield their owne consents
somewhat more willingly;
then

then before, and finally after many consultations passed among themselves, at last they all fully agreed, & consented that the Saintes body should be presently taken vp, and deliuered decently vnto them.

For which resolution the Prior and his companions very hartily & courteously gaue them thanks, & without any delay desired to enter the holy Ile, wherein the Saintes Shrine had ben for many ages deuoutely visited by holy Pilgrims, and
many

many wonderfull cures vpon diseased persons frequently performed.

Neither did they find her body there alone, but many holy bodies both of men and women also were found lying by it; hauing without the place of their buriall, a woodden lardge porch, wherein the people vsed to kneele and pray; esteemed also sacred of it selfe for this continuall miracle, that if any beast came to feed of the grasse neere vnto it, it presently dyed; &

Q

men

men themselves exemplarily
punished, if at any tyme
they committed any irre-
uerence, or vnseemly thing
therein.



CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

How a certaine man had beene
exemplarly punished, two
yeares before the Priours
comming to Guitherine,
for offering to cut downe a
branch of an old Oake which
grew neere the Martyrs
Shrine, serving for a shade
to the Pilgrimes resorting
thither; and how he was by
S. Wenefride miraculously
released.

A MONGST frequent
& very euident mi-

Q 2

racles

racles wrought at *Guitherin* Church, by *S. VVenefride*, and other Saintes there interred, this one as freshly happened, was vnto the Prior and his companions thus certainly recounted.

A certaine labouring man two yeares before, presumed, for some vse, to cut downe a bough of an old Oake, growing neere the Church dore in holy grouūd yielding also a conuenient shade, and shelter to such deuout pilgrimes as could not sometimes enter into

the

the Church for the Con-
course of people, but were
forced to stay without, and
pray vnder it : Who had
no sooner strooke his Hat-
chet into the bough, but
it became therein immo-
uably fixed, and his whole
hand and arme did like-
wise cleaue so fast vnto the
handle of the hatchet, that
they seemed to haue grown
vnto it, & by no force were
able to be remoued.

The poore man finding
himselfe in this distresse,
cried out for help, which his

neighbours hearing , they came running to the place, but finding him in that most pittifull plight, stood amazed at the miracle , as not able any way to help him. Wherefore by their aduise he began to repent him of his fault , and humbly besought, amōgst the other Saints , *S. VVenefrid* to help him. The rest also ioyning in like prayer with him, after they had cryed aloud and all togeather, *Holy VVenefride take pittty on him* , his hand was presently loosed

from

from the hatchet, and his arme to all freedome restored.

Which euident miracle seene by the people, they renewed their wonted veneration to the Saint. They shewed also vnto Priour *Robert* and his companions, the Cut which the man had made in the branch of the tree, remayning still for a testimony thereof: so as with very good reason, they all much reuerenced that holy place, by innumerable miracles so diuinely graced.

CHAP. XIII.

How Priour Robert, the Author of this historie, did himselfe take up the holy body of S. VVenefride, and carry it towards Shrewsbury; How also in the way, he wrought a miracle by some of the earth, found in the Holy head of that Blessed Martyr.

PRior Robert hauing had a generall leaue from the Pastour of the Church and his parishioners to take

vp the Saintes body, went
downe without a guide in-
to her Tōbe or Sepulcher,
and by an interiour light,
communicated then diui-
nely vnto him, knowing
where it lay, caused the
Tombestone to be remo-
ued, and labourers to digge
towards the body; which
when they had found, the
Prior causing them to goe
forth out of the Vault, he
only with some Priests and
Religious persons, stayed
behind, singing psalmes of
ioy deuoutely togeather, &

taking vp the holy bones, together with the next earth that lay about them, he caused them to be put into a fine linnen Cloth, which he had brought for that purpose, & so deuoutly wrapped them together.

With which holy Burden, after he had hartily thanked the Pastour of the Church, & the rest of those Inhabitants, for so sacred a Treasure bestowed vpon him, he with his Company rode that night backwards in their iourney, and being

lodged

lodged by an honest Farmer in their way, they heard a man in some remote part of the house pittifully to groane, and often cry out through the painefullnes of his sicknes. Wherefore the good Priour enquiring where was, went to visit him, & commiserating his case, tooke a little water and blessed it, putting therinto a little of the earth which he found in *S. VVenefrids* head, & caused the party to drinke it; which was no sooner passed downe

into

into the sicke mans stomach, but he fell soundly asleepe, and when he awaked, found himselfe of his dangerous and painefull infirmity perfectly recovered.

By which most euident Miracle, the credit of those sacred reliques, to the great ioy of the Priour himselfe and his companions, was diuinely confirmed, and the deuotion of all present towards them increased. Others also there present did learne from thence, what

what due veneration & reuerence was to be yielded afterwards vnto them.



CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

*How Priour Robert , after
seauen dayes iourney , arri-
uing with the sacred Reli-
ques at Shrewsbury , was
by his Abbot commanded to
place them in S. Giles his
Church neere the gate of that
Citty , vntill all was ready
for their sollemne receauing
into the Monastery : VVith
anotable miracle which hap-
pened in that place.*

P*Rior Robert & his com-
pany in seauen dayes
ended*

ended their journey backe
again with the sacred trea-
sure to *Sbrensbury*; and ha-
ving before giuen notice
to the Abbot of their ap-
proach, they were willed by
him to stay, and repose the
same decently in *S. Giles* his
Church neere the gate of
the Citty, that the Lord Bi-
shop and his Clergy, with
the rest of the people might
be warned therof, and in sol-
lène procession bring them
to the Monastery.

And for the greater honor
of them in the meane time,

the

the Monks were appointed night and day, in their turnes, to watch and pray deuoutely before them, accompanied alwayes in their prayers with multitudes of the people, hartily delighted at such vnusuall Treasures bought vnto them. Neither did the Saint faile by many miraculous cures of sick persons, to requite this her deuout entertaynement; one amongst the rest was especially noted, and so great a one indeed, as it deserueth heere to be particularly

larly recounted, wrought
vpon a younge man, who
had layne long miserably
diseased, and so in his limbs
contracted, that he could
not stand, or lift vp his head
from his knees, towardes
heauen.

This man moued with
the fame of these Reliques
and miraculous cures, fre-
quently wrought by them
at *S. Giles Church*, desired
to be carried thither, and set
before the Aultar whereon
the Sacred Reliques were
placed. Where after he had

R prayed

prayed all the night that God through the merits & prayers of great S. *V*enefrid, would be pleased to cure him, he fell towards the morning into a slumber, and before the Priest came to say the first masse, he was to the wonder of all present, & of the whole Citty likewise, perfectly cured, and made whole; so as after he had sounded forth thankful prayes to God & the holy Martyr, he returned without help of others ioyfully homewards on his feet.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

*With what solemnity & pompe
S. Wenefrides body was
brought vnto the Abbey-
Church of Shrewsbury :
And of a strange Miracle
which happened thereat .*

THE former miracle
increased much the
fame of these holy Reli-
ques brought into the Cit-
ty , and the opinion also
of S. *Wenefrids* sanctity , so
that the cōcourse of people
was very great, daily hono-

ring the holy Virgin in them. Priour Robert in the meane tyme hauing by order of his Abbot, treated with the Bishop about the solemnity of bringing her body frō S. Giles his Church to the Monastery ; it was agreed betweene them, that the people of the Citty and Country likewise should be warned of the certaine day whē this solēnity should be kept, and the Bishops blessing & indulgences for such a feast promulgated, to all that should be present in
the

the procession.

Whereupon, the throng of people kneeling on ech side of the streetes & shedding teares of ioy for such a blessing, brought amongst them, was so great, that it was a wōder to see how gratefull their deuotion was to God, and to the Saint thus honored by them. At which tyme also hapned an euident miracle in the sight of all, worthy heere to be related.

The morning wherein this solemne procession was

to be made , began to be all
ouercast with darke clouds ,
threatning present rayne ,
which had it fallen , would
haue caused no doubt great
nūbers to haue withdrawne
themselues , for feare of
spoyling their best and co-
stly apparell , and so haue
lessened the solēnity inten-
ded . But the Godly , and
Religious Monkes , togea-
ther with the whole Clergy
most earnestly besought the
Disposer of all seasons and
tymes , to graunt them dry
weather for the comfort of
good

good people, and honour of his Saint, vntill the procession at least were ended.

And their prayers to this effect, became so effectually with his diuine Maiesty, that although abundant of raine fell in all other places of the Citty, and fields about it; yet no one droppe thereof fell in the streetes where the body passed: so as all the people present, were greatly amazed to behould mayne showers, as it were, of rayne, already powred out of the cloudes, to hange

miraculously in the ayre, ouer their heads, and yet be kept from falling downe vpon them, till the solemnity was ended: and therfore they redoubled their praises to God, and to the Saint, as Authors of this great miracle wrought euidently before their face.

The Procession ended and the Bishop and Priests arriued with the Reliques at the Monastery, they were by the Abbot, and his Religious, as Iewells aboue all valew, most re-

uerent-

uerently receaued, & vpon
the high Aultar, dedica-
ted to *S. Peter* and *S. Paul*,
magnificently placed, where
many apparent miracles for
the help of soules and bo-
dies, are, to Gods great ho-
nour glorified in his Sain-
tes, daily performed: whose
Name be prayesd for euer
and euer. Amen.

CHAP.

R 5

CHAP. XVI.

*The Conclusion, of the Transla-
tour, unto this second Booke
of S. Wenefrids Life, and
Miracles.*

I May say heere of S. *Wē-*
nefrids miracles (of those
later especially wrought in
Shrewsbury vpon such as ho-
noured the Saint, and were
cured by the vertue of her
reliques) what S. *Augustine*
in his 22. Booke of the *Citty*
of *God*, and 8. Chapter, hath
left written of a blind man

mira-

miraculously restored to sight, and other like miracles done at *Millan*, whilst he liued there, at the holy bodies of *S. Geruasius* and *Protasius*, diuinely reuealed and translated by *S. Ambrose* to another place, as *S. Wenefrids* Reliques were from *Guitherne* vnto *Shrewsbury*; that the Citty, to wit wherein they were done, *grandis erat, & immenso populo teste res gesta est*, was great, and an immense cōcourse of people able to testifie the verity of them. So as he must want

all

all humane sayth, and be obstinately willfull, who shal refuse to belieue them.

Moreouer I adde, that the Author writing this historie, and publishing the same shortly after these miracles were done, & in the same Citty also; would not for very shame haue written vnruly of them, since not only the Inhabitants therof, but himselfe likewise, certainly had seene and knowne them.

But, as *S. Augustine* complained of the Gentills in
his

his time, for not belieuing
apparent miracles done at
Saints Aultars, euen before
multitudes of witnesses, and
vpon persons, certainly
knowne to haue bene both
diseased and cured: so may I
heare taxe many Protestants
of like incredulity, who are
wont to laugh at such vn-
doubted relations, though
neuer so anciently and cer-
tainly testified, by no lesse
witnesses then *S. Ambrose*, *S.*
Hierome, *S. Augustine*, and o-
ther holy Fathers, to whom
they vsually giue little cre-
dit

dit in such Historicall verities, as they will belieue any Gentill, or Heathen Author before them; the which my selfe haue proued by many experiences, and for an example, I will heere mention one.

It was my chance some yeares since, to be the guest of a Protestant Gentleman in England, of especial note and ranke in the Countrey wher he liued, who seing me one day fixedly to look vpo a faire picture hāging in his Hall, wherein the diuers

tor.

torments of some Primitive Martyrs were liuely represented; Syr, said he, who can belieue (as for my part I cannot) that men, to men, and for Religion only, euer vsed such barbarous cruelties, & more then butcherly inhumanities? To whome for clearing of so certaine and testified a truth, I alleaged what *Tertullian* in sundry places of his workes *S. Cyprian*, *S. Iustine* the Martyr, *S. Hierome*, *S. Ambrose*, and other innumerable Fathers, had either expressely

affir.

affirmed ; or supposed of these Martyrs torments , & that in bookes either written to the Martyrs themselves, or to Heathen magistrates their Condemners ; yet preuayled I nothing , till calling for *Tacitus*, a Gentill Author , and most hatefull enemy to Christ himselfe, with all such as faithfully professed him; I shewed this Gentleman what he had left written of *Nero's* cruelty, vsed against Christians, by causing them to be put vpon stakes in eminent places
of

of Rome, cloathed in pitch shirts, with their armes extended, and so to be fired in darke nights, as torches to the Citty; with other like inhumane torments, exercised vpon them.

Whereupon he began to credit what his Picture represented: and being asked againe by me, why he believed not before so many testimonies which I had cited vnto him, out of the holy Fathers; he plainely told me (and it is the common perswasion of Prote-

S stants)

stants) that most of the Fathers were superstitiously inclined, and apt to write Fabulous Legends of Saintes sufferings, counterfaite Miracles, and the like, as themselves ouercredulously believed them.

With which preiudice of opinion many, I doubt not, will come to read this life of *S. VVenefride*, & believe the lesse of it, as of things done at home, and long agoe in our owne Country; *sed sapientia iustificata est à filiis suis*, but Gods wisdom & power

mani-

manifested for the glory of
himselfe, in his Saintes, by
such miraculous works te-
stified vnto vs, will by de-
uout Catholiques be pious-
ly believed; not as pointes
of fayth, diuinely reuealed,
but as pious histories pro-
bably written, and worthy
for such to be credited.

The

*The End of the second
Booke.*



THE
TABLE
OF CHAPTERS
conteyned in this Booke.

THe Authours Prologue to the
life of S. Wenefride. pag. 1.

THE FIRST BOOKE.

OF S. Beuno his great sanctity,
and how he was inspired by God
to go to S. Wenefrids Father: and
had his Daughter commended to his
charge. Chap. 1. pag. 9.

How S. Wenefrids Father did
help S. Beuno to build a Church and

THE TABLE

*Monastery in his owne Territory.
And how S. Wenefrid resolved to
conserue her Virginity. Chap. 2.
pag. 19.*

*How S. Wenefrids Father ap-
proved the Resolution his Daughter,
and gaue away her dowry in Almes
to the poore. Chap 3. pag. 27*

*How S. Wenefride was beheaded
by Cradocus the Kings sonne, in de-
fence of her Virginity. Chap. 4.
pag. 35.*

*How Cradocus for his wicked
fact, was swallowed up aline by the
ground; And what lamentations
were made for S. Wenefrides death.
Chap. 5. pag. 46.*

*How S. Wenefride was rayse
again to life; and a white Circle ap-
pearing in her Necke, in the place
where it was cut off. Chap. 6 pa. 53.*

How S Wenefride was solemnely

veyled

OF CHAPTERS.

veyled by S. Beuno, and instructed
in the practice of a Religious life.

Chap. 7. pag. 52

Of S Wenefrids great griefe for
her maister S. Beuno his departure
from her. Chap. 8. pag 72.

How S. Wenefride gathered to
geathen many Noblemens Daughters
and instructed them in the practice
of Religious piety, as Gouverneste of
therest. Chap. 9. pag. 80.

Of the great fame of S. Wene-
frides holynes of life: and of the gift
she sent vnto her maister S. Beuno.
Chap. 10. pag. 87.

How S. Wenefride had the death
of her maister S. Beuno reuealed vn
to her: and soone after changed the
place of her aboad. Chap. 11. pa. 94.

How S. Wenefride was diuinely
directed in her iourney to a holy man
called Deifer, who was chosen of

THE TABLE

*God to be her directour in place of S.
Beuno. Chap. 12. pag. 101.*

*How S. Deifer sent S. Wenefride
for further Direction of her life, to
another holy man called Saturnus.
Chap. 13. pag. 107.*

*How S. Saturnus after he had re-
ceaued S. Wenefride, sent her to
the Holy Abbot Elerius to be fur-
ther instructed in the Will of God.
Chap. 14. pag. 112.*

*How S. Elerius brought S. Wene-
fride to a Monastery of holy Virgins,
and placed her there amongst them.
Chap. 15. pag. 117.*

*How S. Wenefride behaved her-
selfe in the Monastery; where her
great sanctimony of life was soone
discovered. Chap. 16. pag. 126.*

*How S. Elerius made knowne vn-
to his owne Religious Brethren, and
other people, the great sanctity of*

S. We.

OF CHAPTERS.

S. Wenefride. Chap. 17. pag. 133

How S. Wenefride was made Abbess of the whole Monastery by S. Elerius, and governed the same in all piety to her dying day. Chap. 18. pag. 138.

Of the high Esteeme all sorts of people had of S. Wenefrides holines of life; & of the Miracles which she wrought in her Monastery, by curing all manner of diseases. Chap. 19. pag. 144.

How S. Wenefride was forewarned of her death, and acquainted S. Elerius, and her sisters therewith. Chap. 20. pag. 150.

Of S. Wenefrides last sickness, and her comfort therein; and of her pious Exhortation to her sisters of the Monastery. Chap. 21. pag. 157.

Of S. Wenefrides happy death and buriall: and of some Miracles

THE TABLE

wrought presently at her Sepulcher;
and of the death of S. Elerius also.
Chap. 22. pag. 162.

An Appendix of the Translation,
unto the first Booke, concerning
diuers others particulars of S. Wenefride,
omitted in the History.
pag. 169.

THE SECOND BOOKE.

OF the great Concourse of people
to S. Wenefrids Well, for the
miracles there wrought, after her de-
parture from that place. Chap. 1.
pag. 177.

Of a blind man restored to his sight
by washing his eyes in S. Wenefrides
Well, and praying in her Chappell.
Chap. 2. pag. 182.

Of

OF CHAPTERS.

Of a Theefe punished for pursuing
one that fled into S. Wenefrides
Chappell. Chap. 3. pag. 186.

Of two other Theeves that had
stollen a Cow neere S. Wenefrides
Chappell, and were tracked by the
Cows footing, euen in hard stony &
rocky wayes; and the Cow againe re-
couered by the Owner. Chap. 4.
pag. 193.

Of sicke Children throxne into S.
Wenefrides Well, and cured;
Also of Agues and Feauers cured by
drinking of the same water. Chap. 5.
pag. 199.

How diuers others Thefts commit-
ted neere S. Wenefrides Well, were
punished, and the Theeves became pe-
nitent. Chap. 6. pag. 204.

Of the first occasion of translating
S. Wenefrides body to Shrews-
bury. Chap. 7. pag. 209.

Of

THE TABLE

Of the earnest desire which the Abbot and Monkes of Shrewsbury had, to get the body of S. V Venefride vnto them: and how finally they obtained the same. Chap. 8. pag. 227.

Of a vision happened to Prior Robert in his iourney, which gaue him hope to obteyne the body of S. V Venefride. Chap. 9. pag. 226.

How the Parish Priest of Guitherin, where S V Venefrides body lay, gaue his consent for the remouing the same to Shrewsbury. Chap. 10. pag. 231.

Of Priour Roberts speach vnto the people of Guitherin, to obtaine their consent, for getting away the body of S. V Venefride thence. Chap. 11. pag. 136.

Of a certaine labouring man punished for offering to cut downe a branch of an Oake nere S. V Venefrides

frides

OF CHAPTERS.

*frides Shrine at Cuthbert. Cha. 12.
pag. 243.*

*How Priour Robert tooke vp S.
VVenefrides body, and carried it to
Shrewsbury seauen dayes iourney:
And of a miracle wrought in the way.
Chap. 13. pag. 248.*

*How S. VVenefrides body being
brought to Shrewsbury, was for a
tyme placed in S. Giles Church, neere
the gate of the Citty. Ch. 14. p. 254.*

*Of the solemnity & pōpe wherewith
S. VVenefrides body was finally car-
ried to the Abbey Church at Shrews-
bury; And of a strang Miracle hap-
pened thereat. Chap. 15. pag. 259.*

*The Conclusion of the Translatour,
vnto the second booke o' S. VVenefri-
des life, and Miracles. Ch. 16. p. 266.*

FINIS.

Pfal. 150.

*Laudate Dominum in
Sanctis eius.*

Prayse our Lord in
his Saintes.

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